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Cothrai Gogan CSSp



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Spiritans in Nairobi
1899-1999

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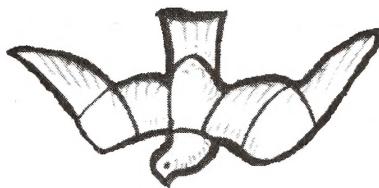
H. G. M.

THE SPIRITANS IN NAIROBI
1899 - 1999



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COTHRAI GOGAN CSSP



H. G. M.

Holy

Ghost

Mission

THE SPIRITANS IN NAIROBI

1899 - 1999

SPIRITUS - NAIROBI
1998

H. G. M. - Spiritans in Nairobi
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1998 039936478

Cover: A centuries-old Kikuyu prophecy warned the people of a dangerous serpent to come from the sea. They considered the railine its fulfilment. Unaware of the prophecy, the Uganda Railway poster-artist unwittingly depicts the line from the Coast to Mt. Kenya as a snake. Missionaries too, unaware of the unfortunate insinuation, used the Railway extensively.

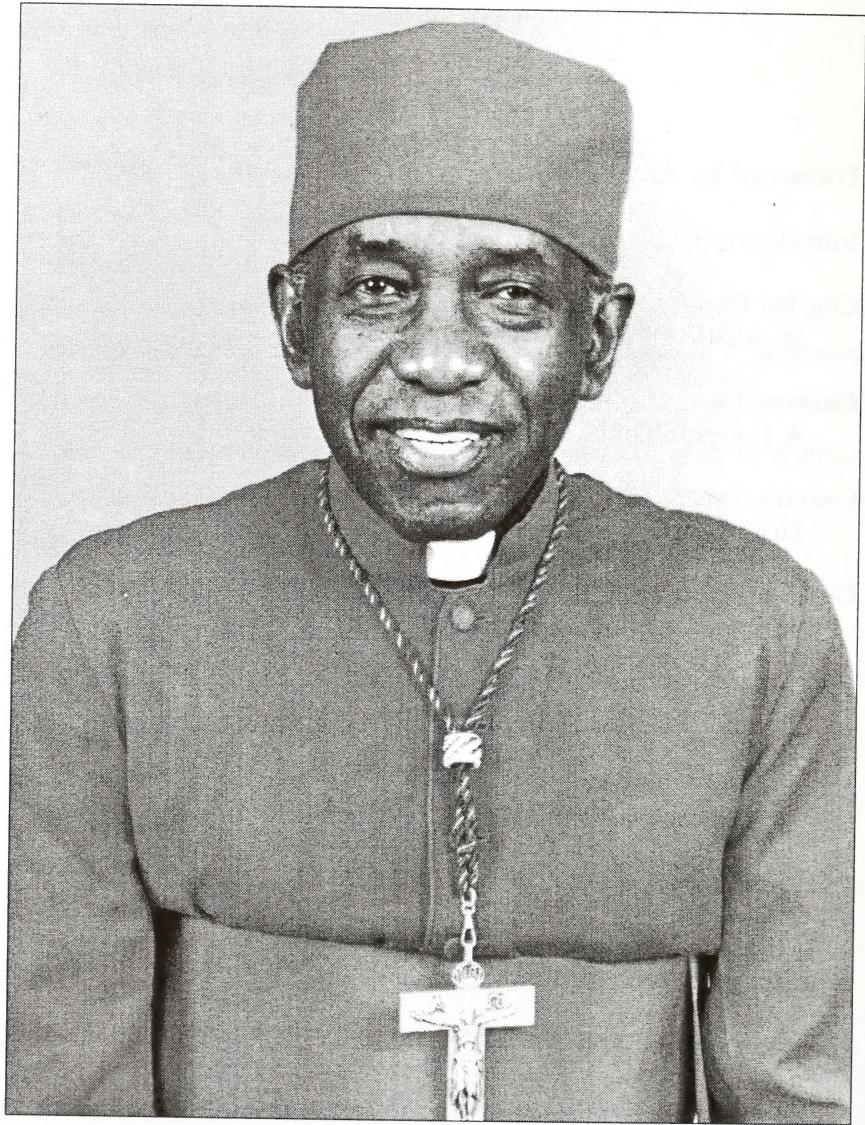
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By the same author: Something Else: Poems of Prayer
The Gospel of Brother Gabriel

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Archbishop of Nairobi

FOREWORD

As we celebrate the centenary of the founding of this city of Nairobi, it is well also to remember with gratitude the pioneer missionaries who established the Catholic Church here practically at the same time. These were the Spiritan Fathers and Brothers of the Holy Ghost Congregation. Because of them, the legal name for this Archdiocese of Nairobi was even for many years H.G.M. - Holy Ghost Mission. We owe them a debt of remembrance and gratitude.

What is remarkable about this body of men of different nationalities, as revealed by their diaries, is that they were generally ordinary people like ourselves. Yet, they were prepared to put themselves totally at the service of the Holy Spirit's inspiration and the direction of their Bishop. We of this generation have entered into the great and precious harvest for which they laboured so perseveringly. Our best gratitude will be to imitate their devotion and obedience.

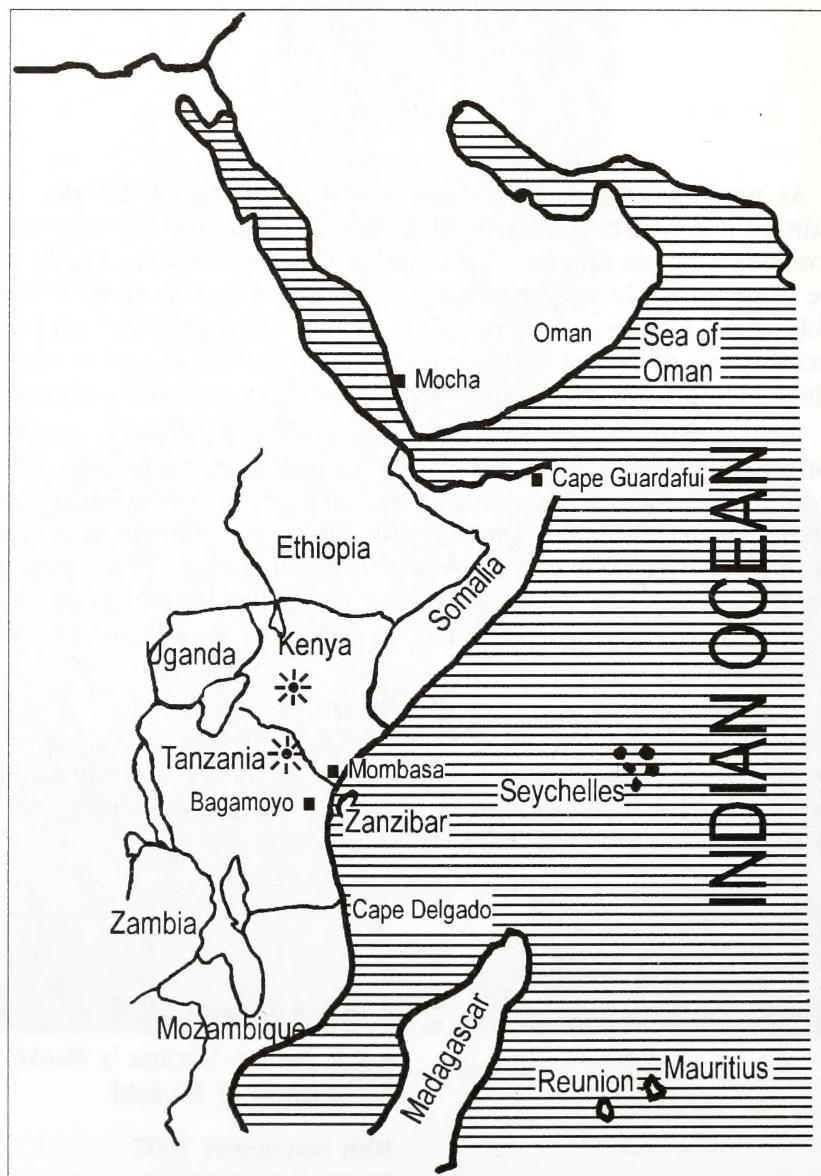
I therefore, recommend this lively and interesting story of our Christian forebears: H.G.M. - SPIRITANS IN NAIROBI by Fr. Cothrai Gogan to all my co-workers - priests, religious, laity, as a means of giving us a better understanding of what we have inherited, and facing our ever-growing task with confidence.

+ Mungi Maria Ngeli

+ R.S. Ndingi Mwana 'a Nzuki
Archbishop of Nairobi

30th November 1997
Feast of St. Andrew

EAST AFRICA REGION AND INDIAN OCEAN



INTRODUCTION

This small work is an attempt to sketch the story of the Holy Ghost Fathers, now commonly called Spiritans, in what is now the Archdiocese of Nairobi. It is a history of one religious society or congregation within one local church. That history unfolded within the context of the political and social history of East Africa. It was the century of invasion, occupation, colonisation, annexation, settlement and plantation by the powers with which we are all familiar, and even the waging of wars between these powers, and finally the regaining of Uhuru.

Evangelization does not take place in a vacuum, it has been said. The social, economic and political situation of evangelized and evangelizer shape a divine story not only in human language but in a particular accent of that language. Many of the early Spiritans came from the ancient kingdom of Alsace, sometimes part of France, sometimes part of Germany. In general, their loyalties leaned to France, even though many were legally German citizens. Besides, it was precisely in the year 1899, when our story begins, that relations between France and Britain at the time reached their lowest point. In Uganda some French-born missionaries had been forced to withdraw. Paradoxically, the French state to which the Spiritans were loyal passed many anti-Church laws, even decreeing the dissolution of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost!

The present Catholic diocese of Nairobi comprises two quite distinct areas: one urban, the multi-racial capital city of a modern state; the other, the rural homeland of the Kabete or Karura branch of the Kikuyu people. The mission was primarily conceived for the Kikuyu. Being catholic, it had to embrace all.

NOTE ON SOURCES

In accord with the brief given me by my Superior, the principal source for this sketch of Spiritan history is the *Community Journals* or Diaries. No one of these diaries covers the whole period. Even within the periods covered, there are blanks lasting not only days weeks or months but years and decades! They are punctuated by the official complaints of visiting superiors. Many missions, like Limuru, have no record available.

Coverage is also partial from the point of view of the diarists or "journalists," most of whom follow their own particular bent or interest. Written, sometimes quite illegibly, in French or English, they are liberally sprinkled with phrases in Swahili, Latin, Irish or in Kikuyu, where the writer displays his intimate knowledge of families or places, indigenous trees or plants, traditional seasons, dances or other customs. Besides religious matters, we are generously informed on the state of the weather, on the various illnesses of the confrères and treatment thereof, occasionally on world politics or the result of a football match or a unique hand of cards dealt to a confrère at Bridge! Mangu is generous with football scores, Kilima Mbogo gives regular rain-gauge reports, St. Peter Claver's, year after year and day after day, gives the grim results of Fr. Paddy Fullen's night-long agonies with Mau Mau condemned to hang.

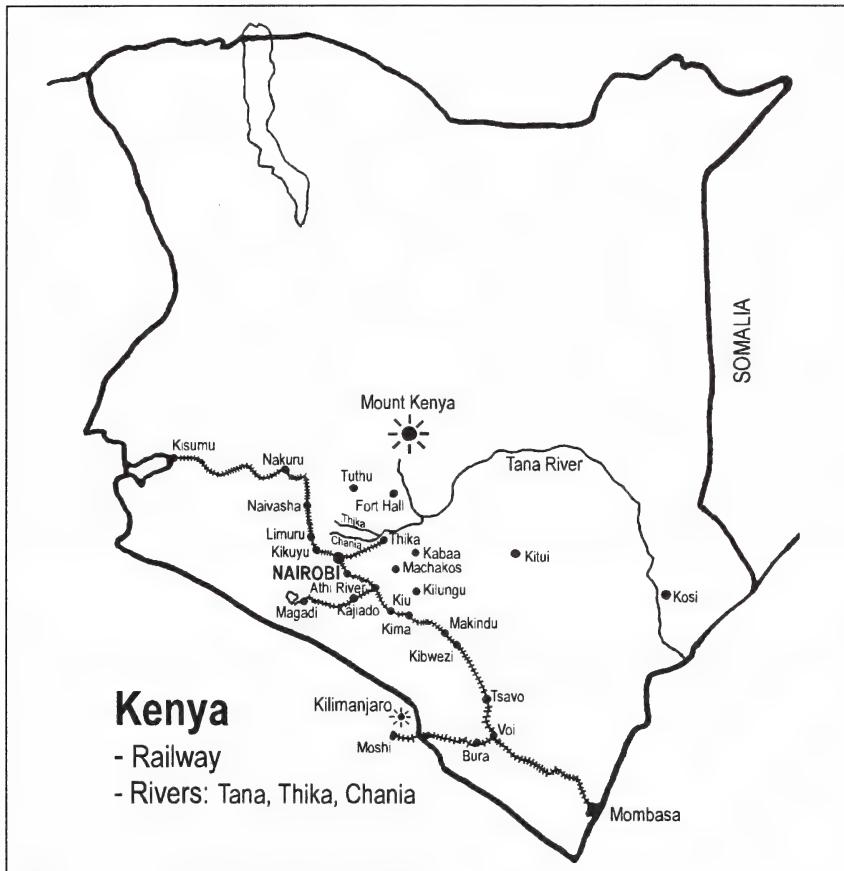
Fr. James OFlynn intersperses facts with verses and reflections: "*I have sent you to 'reap that in which you did not labour' – a very useful subject of remembrance for all who may think that the Salvation of Africa has only begun on their arrival in the Continent.*" (Kalimoni, November 1947)

I have, therefore, transcribed or translated substantial sections to give the reader some idea of these documents more or less inaccessible to the public at large. Because of the very personal bent of the writers, the story often revolves around certain individuals. Other workers who toiled in the same vineyard of the Lord are not caught within the frame of the picture. The register of persons at the back, drawn with permission from Fr. Henry Koren's "*Spiritan East Africa Memorial 1863-1993*," attempts to make up for this lack.

The next most important source is the *General Bulletin* of the Congregation which summarises the periodic reports of Regional Superiors to the Mother House in Paris. Thirdly, there is the Bishop's annual summary report to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Books, articles and papers mentioned were used mostly for background information and incidental details.

I am grateful to all those who helped with this work, making books and documents available like Fr. de Banville, General Archives CSSp, Fr. Layden, Irish Province Archives, Mr. and Mrs. Macartney for access to their library; to Mr. Daniel Kamiri for sharing his boyhood memories, and also to all those who read and commented on various sections. May God reward them.

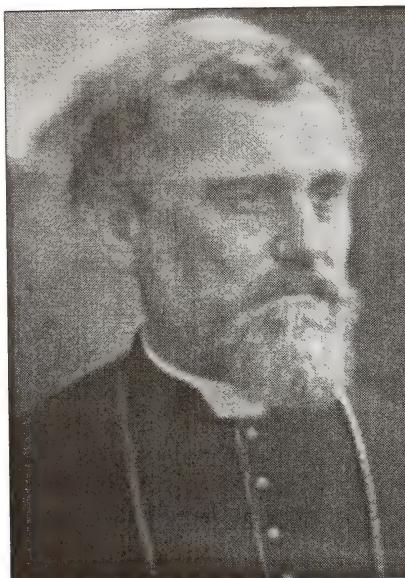
MAP OF KENYA WITH TANA RIVER AND RAILWAY



SWAHILI WORDS IN TEXT

askari	guard	mabati	corrugated iron
Baba Mtakatifu	Holy Father	mzee/wazee	elder/s
baraka	blessing	pori	savannah
boma	enclosure	safari	trek
kanzu	gown	shamba	farm
kazi	work	shenzi	heathen
karani	clerk	tembo	palm-wine, home brew
kwa heri	good-bye		

SPIRITAN BISHOPS IN NAIROBI 1891-1971



Emile Augustine Allgeyer



John Gerard Neville



John Heffernan



John J. McCarthy

Chapter One

SAINT AUSTIN OF KIKUYU

The beginning of all beauty, *Nakusontelon* in the Maasai language, appeared to Ronald O. Preston, an intruding Englishman, “a bleak, swampy stretch of soppy landscape, devoid of human habitation of any sort, the resort of wild animals of every species.” It was bisected by a small river called *Uaso Nairobi* – cold stream. That was the site of the future capital of Kenya. Mr. Preston, rail engineer, had supervised the laying of the “iron snake” from the Indian Ocean. That iron snake had wound itself 500km across the Makupa Creek from Mombasa Island, up the escarpment, across the Taru desert, across the miles and miles of gradually rising scrub and savannah of the Tsavo region, across rocks and rivers, through the Machakos hills. Nairobi, mile 325, was reached on May 31st. The Kikuyu raided the same day. The intruders were evidently not welcome. It was the year of Our Lord, 1899.

Many more intruders were to thrust themselves uninvited on that place and people. Passenger trains would be operating by August, and on Saturday the 12th, a French Catholic bishop, Emile Allgeyer, was on board with two companions of the Holy Ghost Fathers. They were Brother Blanchard Dillenseger and Father Alain Hémery from Bura Catholic Mission in the Taita Hills. As the great Athi plains began to spread out and the dark-blue Kikuyu Highlands to fill the horizon, they saw, as Preston had, an immense sea of wild animals: antelope, zebra, wildebeeste fled in waves from the fiery serpent. Wild-west style cowcatchers swept the lazier ones aside. Speed 15 m.p.h. They arrived at 6.30 p.m. after a three-day journey from Voi. Dusk was falling. At over 5000 feet above sea-level, and the month being August, the air

was cool. A few shacks lay about, lost in the vast plain. There was not one tree. The train could continue towards Kikuyu station. The three missionaries set up their tent.

Next morning, early, the Bishop invited as many of the Catholic rail-workers who could be reached to join him for Sunday Mass. In the evening, he visited them in their quarters and encouraged them to send a petition to the Chief Engineer, Mr. Whitehouse, to request a Catholic church and a house for the priest who would take charge of it. The rail authorities had already shown their goodwill by putting a First-Class carriage with a special luggage van at the disposal of the Bishop. Later, they would cheerfully have the Reverend Father, fallen ill, delivered home by trolley. Trains would deliver loads of soil to the new Mission. With their personal baggage and holy books, they had brought one hundred coffee seedlings from Bura Mission shamba. With the Word of God, these evangelists intended to plant other seeds as well.



Nairobi Camp: early 1900's

14 August: Visit to the Chief Engineer of the Uganda Railway who promised support for the building of a church in Nairobi. He invites us to dinner the following evening.

15 August: Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mass for the Feast in a large tent provided by Ali Mishram. Bishop Allgeyer after Mass announces a big meeting of all Catholics the following Sunday after Mass.

In the evening we go to look for a site for a mission-station in Kikuyu country. The Bishop decides to settle provisionally in the boma of a chief named Mzundo who appears favourable. It is a few miles from the station on the bank of the Nairobi river. (Near Paulines, Riverside Drive).

16 August: We buy a piece of land from the said Mzundo and Br. Blanchard plants the first seeds. In the evening we dine with Mr. Whitehouse, and the Bishop fixes definitively with him a site for a Catholic church at Nairobi station. (Bishop Allgeyer, a past pupil of Blackrock College Dublin, spoke fluent English).

This Nairobi site is the future Holy Family parish and cathedral centre, more recently dubbed basilica. It would serve the multi-racial city community that would grow around that spot. But Emile Allgeyer's eyes were set further away on the forest-covered heights. A mission to the Kikuyu had for a long time been in his mind. His predecessor as Vicar Apostolic, Bishop de Courmont, had often thought about it; from the summit of Kilimanjaro, he could see the sister mount Kenya beckoning. But the enormous difficulty of penetrating inland so far from the Coast had forced him continually to postpone the attempt.

Following the example of other Christian missionaries, Anglicans, Methodists and Lutherans, he established a small mission-station at Kozi on the Tana River in 1890. Floods destroyed this mission and the village itself during the long rains, the following year. The two missionaries left there, being forced to take refuge in a tree, suffered greatly from exposure. After being rescued, they died before the year was out. They were two of the thirty Spiritans who died in East Africa during the decade. In 1892, a wealthy American explorer did reach the foot of Mount Kenya by this route, yet because of the enormous difficulties he met in the area he thought the expedition a failure. In 1894, a Spiritan

land caravan setting out from Mombasa was attacked before it was two days out and forced to turn back. In mid-1895, the first Mill Hill caravan passed by Kikuyu and reached Kampala. The same year, two other caravans on the same route were cut to pieces by Maasai and Nandi.

It is worth recalling that in 1862, at the request of Bishop Maupoint of Reunion, the Vatican transferred his responsibility for the whole of Eastern Africa from Somalia to Mozambique, including all the varied peoples of the interior, to the Holy Ghost Fathers. (In West Africa they had also been confided the whole coast from Senegal to Angola). In 1878, the two new vicariates of West Tanganyika and Nyanza were set up and confided to the Missionaries of Africa, called "White Fathers" because of their robes. (Spiritans were "Black Fathers" for the same reason). "We welcomed joyfully the first Missionaries who arrived and we continue to extend to them every brotherly assistance," de Courmont, Bishop wrote to Rome. Very soon again, he handed over the Vicariate of Dar es Salaam to the Benedictines.

The White Fathers, in their turn, handed over to the Mill Hill Fathers Eastern Uganda and that part of modern Kenya which came under the so-called Uganda Protectorate, reaching right up to the Mau Escarpment. In fact, both White Fathers and Mill Hill thought Mount Kenya and its people lay within their territory. Later, the Kikuyu Highlands beyond the Chania River would be confided to the Consolata Fathers.

In one sense the Kikuyu people on the near side of that same Chania river were not native to the area. They were the spear-head of a centuries-long penetration of that massive forest-belt from the West! These dark-brown pioneers having come to the edge of their world, the forested plateau, were confronted by a race of red-skinned men (atune) coming at them in the opposite direction, invading with their iron snake. For the redskins, the mutual discovery was unpleasant and bothersome, for the brown man, catastrophic. The primeval story of the Mount Kenya peoples was one of evading such light-skinned people.

Thus the mission to the Kikuyu people found them at the most critical moment of their history. For not only had they realised that they had come to the edge of their universe, and the

proverb promising ever more land proved false, but these very last years had wiped out huge sections of the population as a result of drought, locusts, famine and smallpox. Both land and food would prove wanting, and even their war-shields.

"18 August: Leaving at 7 a.m. for Kikuyu station and from there to Fort Smith to visit the District Officer, Mr. Hall, and Mr. Crawshay, who during the whole day was pleased to accompany us on our walk through the countryside and to give us all the information we desired. From Fort Smith the Bishop wrote a long letter to the Mother House on Kikuyuland; he is concerned to have established a reasonably well-defined western boundary to the areas his Holy Ghost Fathers and Bishop Hanlon's Mill Hill Fathers were to serve.

19 August: Early in the morning, departure for Nairobi. The Bishop made the trip from Fort Smith to Nairobi on foot to visit in more detail the Kikuyu countryside. On the way back, we visit Br. Blanchard's little garden, and one can see with pleasure that the seeds are beginning to germinate.

20 August: Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Feast of St. Joachim. Mass is in a large room put at our disposal and prepared by a few Goans. Fr. Hémery sprinkles the people with holy water, the Bishop makes a speech to those who have come in quite good numbers. (130 people, mostly of Goan origin, at that time Portuguese citizens, with a few British, Indian and one Mauritian). The Mass begins at 8.30 sharp, and during it the Goans perform several pieces of music. Some receive Communion. After Mass, a small meeting with the principal Goan people. In the afternoon at 4, big meeting presided over by the Bishop. The Goans undertake to subscribe for the church and to present a petition to Mr. Whitehouse. Later, the Bishop receives in his tent a visit from Mr. Whitehouse, his wife and his brother, and gives an account of the meeting to the Chief Engineer who promises to do his utmost, so that the Catholics may have a church in Nairobi as soon as possible.

21 August: Departure of Bishop for the Coast, and of Fr. Hémery for Bura. Br. Blanchard remained behind to build a temporary house." Bishop Allgeyer's letter was already on its way to the Spiritan Mother House in Paris. The Superior General at the time was Bishop Alexandre Le Roy who had formerly worked in Kilimanjaro, Mombasa and Malindi. The date: 18 August 1899.

"This is my first letter from Kikuyu country. Ah! Kikuyu land! We had talked about it so much that at last we had indeed to go there and to start something.

Kikuyu land (le Kikouyou) is without qualification a magnificent country, very healthy, the healthiest of all East Africa, according to what all the Europeans say, and it is our own experience. The population is dense and numerous, about 300,000 inhabitants, and in spite of what people have said about their ferocity, during the times when caravan carriers stole from them shamelessly, and when the soldiers pitilessly harried them with continued attacks, the people living there seem gentle, affable, and are in no way given to making trouble for Europeans, much less for missionaries, who have come only to teach them and to do them good. I myself have the proof since the two weeks I have spent among them, living as it were their life, being initiated in their customs. Among most other peoples, my appearance in a village was the signal for people to flee in every direction, with women displaying all kinds of gestures, and loud shrieks from the children. Here, it is quite the contrary. At my first visit to the headman of the area, people gathered around me in a way I had never experienced before: the men came and straightforwardly shook my hand, and all the women wanted to do the same; I reserved that honour for some of them who had a regal bearing. (Remark that it was quite uncommon for a French cleric of the time to shake hands with a woman). The children came and went, dodging to every side around me, some pulling my shoe-laces, some pulling my socks, some determined to sit on my knees, to have the pleasure of pulling my beard and to examine if everything in me, nose, ears and eyes, were the same as on their own dark faces.

We can have there for all our missionaries in the Vicariate a first class sanatorium, where they can come by train without cost. What a great advantage!"

Bishop Allgeyer obviously appreciated the friendliness of the people. However, he was unaware that he had already offended. He had broken one fundamental rule in the purchase of land: no individual may sell land without consulting the elders of the village. Second, Kikuyus never recognised individual ruling chiefs,

and those who called themselves chiefs were collaborators of the invader. Third, all those he had made friends with, Chief Engineer Whitehouse and his wife, Railhead Engineer Preston, Lion-killer and Engineer Patterson and all their workers, Police-Inspector Moore with whom Fr. Hémery stayed – not one of them was considered a friend by the Kikuyu people in general. Dr. Hinde and Mr. Ainsworth with whom the Fathers became quite friendly, their collaborator Capt. Meinertzhangen, considered stock-raiding and massacre as acceptable means to impose the rule of Law! Mr. Hall, the District Officer, called by the Kikuyu Wanyahoro, smooth-tongued, untrustworthy person, who had received the Bishop so politely, had written to his father a few years before that the only solution for the Kikuyu was “to wipe them out; and I should be only too delighted to do so.”

In 1896, the same Mr. Hall had settled three English families in the heart of the country at Murang'a, renaming it after himself Fort Hall! So the Kikuyu who had progressively but peacefully settled the territories of the original pygmy, Athi and Dorobo forest-dwellers, keeping traditional names of places, refraining from hunting, must now be prepared in their turn to be settled by the Red Strangers, who claimed all uncultivated land as the property of their Queen 4000 miles away!

Paradoxically, these very strangers who had initially come to these parts to destroy the slave-trade in East Africa would now reduce to a Tsarist-type serfdom, knout included, the freedom-loving Kikuyu who by some miracle had virtually been untouched by it. Our Spiritan diarist could complain to the pages of his journal: *“Poor people, and you haven’t seen the end of it yet.”* A whole people had been beggared.

Yes, the children had climbed up on the Bishop’s knee, but it would take more than that to convince a whole populace that you were different. “Gutiri muthungu na mubia,” the saying would go, “Planter and priest are the same.”

A Journal entry reads: *“Mr. Ainsworth has allowed moving the camp of the sick closer to the Mission so that we can take care of them and baptize the dying.”* These were mostly smallpox patients. One of the traders had tried to force them into the forest. Their own people were not above leaving them out on the hy-

ena trails. Perhaps people might begin to realise that Mon Père was different.

11 September: Visits to some Goans and to Mr. Patterson, Railway Engineer, from whom we obtain some planks to make doors and windows for the temporary hut.

12 September: We go looking for some corrugated sheets to roof the temporary house; and also some loads of rice to pay the local workers who are plastering our hut with mud.

13 September: Visit to the great chief of the Maasai, Lenana, accompanied by Mr. Patterson. (Lenana and his father had managed the red menace more skilfully than their brothers and rivals, the Kikuyu).

14 September: During the whole day, we work at putting up the roof of the house. The locals plaster inside."

Fr. Hémery, now returned from Bura, has also visited Mr. Ainsworth, Vice-Commissioner of the Province, the magistrate of Nairobi, several engineers, and two captains of the Railway. Everywhere excellent reception.

17 September: Afternoon, Father, Brother and "children" go for a walk towards the fields to chase away the monkeys who are starting to steal our potatoes. There seem to be quite a lot of them in the neighbourhood.

18 September: Visit to Mr. Patterson who is to leave for Mombasa, and from there to England by the French mail boat. The Indians offer him a beautiful engraved silver bowl for having delivered them from two man-eating lions in the Tsavo neighbourhood. (Our diarist does not mention the long epic poem they had composed in his honour. The lions had killed twenty-four rail-workers and scores of local people). After this very touching ceremony, the champagne flowed abundantly. In the evening, dinner offered by Dr. Brook in honour of the same Mr. Patterson brought together nearly all the Europeans in Nairobi. Nineteen of them. Songs. Toasts. Nothing was missing at the celebration.

Mr. Patterson also gave me a present of a good camp-bed, a sofa, and four loads of rice.

20 September: Walk through the countryside. It seems quite well-populated.

21 September: Visits to several Engineers, Mr. Wilby, Mr. Eastwood, to Captains Tompkins and Foley and to several Goans. Then to Dr. Brook who brings me to see the sick in the hospital. The temporary house being nearly complete except for doors and windows, Br. Blanchard begins to transplant the vegetables in the garden. The drought continues, which gives him double work to do.

22 September: While in the garden, we learn that Nairobi market went on fire during the night – all stalls have been burnt down. "Siafu" soldier-ants are coming to disturb us at every moment during the night.

23 September: No news from the Coast, nor of the materials asked for to finish the house.

Nearly every day, the chief Mzundo supplies us with some mutton and cows' milk in exchange for a little tea.

Evening. Supper with Dr. Brook.

24 September: Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Our Lady of Ransom. Mass in a big room in Nairobi.

After lunch with Mr. MacCallum, return to the Mission.

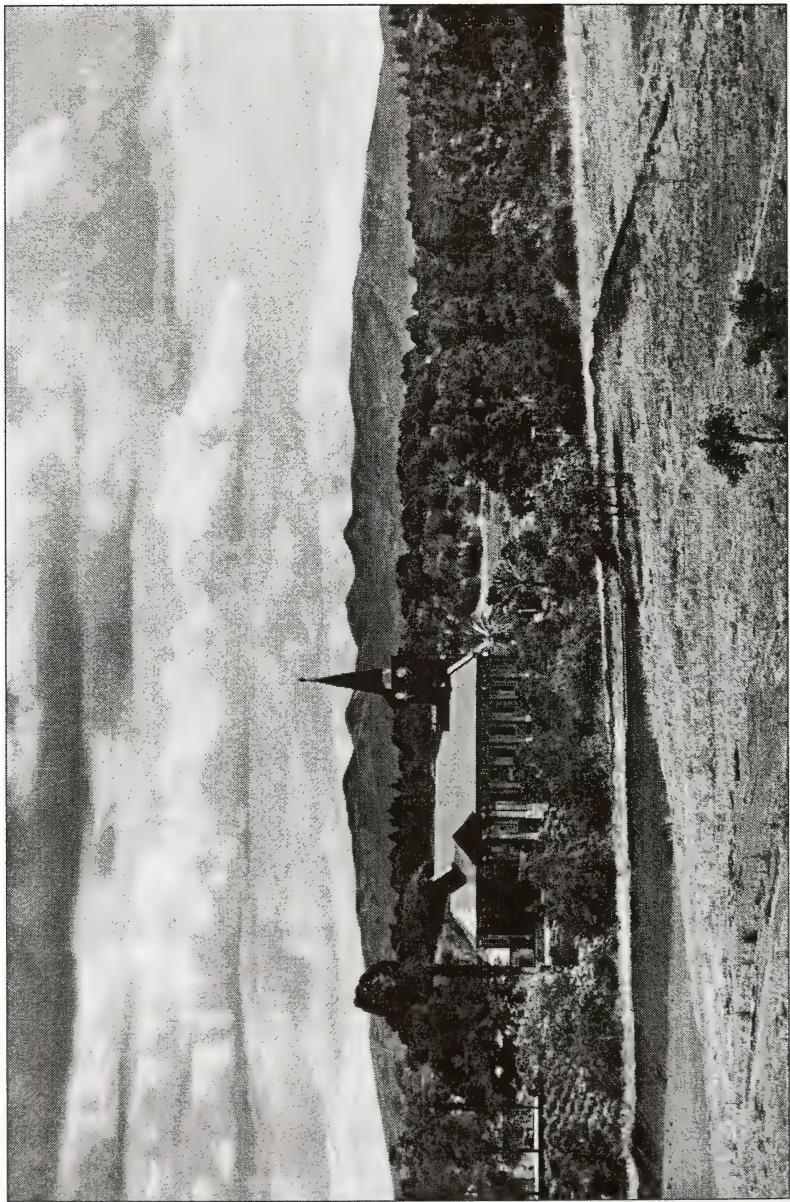
Afternoon walk through the country. On the way back, Br. Blanchard passes by the camp for those with smallpox and baptizes one child in danger of death.

25 September: Mass inside the house."

The report to the Mother House reads: "The mission-station was founded. Bishop Allgeyer has given the name Simonisdale to the place in memory of (his friend) Canon Simonis. He has put the station under the patronage of St. Augustine or, as is said in English, St. Austin, Apostle of England."

Since the foundation, Fr. Hémery has been able to baptise 80 children in danger of death. In the garden already there are growing every kind of vegetable: cabbages, potatoes, lettuce, onions, radishes, etc.

So began St. Austin of Kikuyu – St. Augustin du Kikouyou.



St. Austin's Church: residence left-hand side; Ngong Hills behind

Chapter Two

A COFFEE-SHAMBA IN KENYA 1899-1918

We had a farm in Africa, at the foot of the Ngong Hills. We grew coffee on our farm. We had over a thousand acres of land, and had then got much spare land besides the coffee-plantation. So Karen Blixen might have written about St. Austin's a decade later. She describes her visit there:

"On Christmas night while I was in Africa, I used to drive over to the French Mission to hear the Midnight Mass. As you drove through the plantation, you heard the chiming of the Mission bell a long way off in the clear warm air. A crowd of happy, lively people were at the place round the church when you arrived, the French and Italian shopkeepers of Nairobi with their families had come out, the nuns from the convent-school were present, and the African congregation swarmed in gay clothes.

"The Fathers had planned and built their Church themselves with the assistance of their African congregation, and they were with reason very proud of it. There was here a fine grey Church with a bell-tower on it; it was laid out on a broad courtyard, above terraces and stairs, in the midst of their coffee-plantation, which was the oldest in the Colony and very skilfully run."

The oldest? Not exactly. Coffee had grown wild in the forests of Kenya as in Ethiopia before time was counted. The first attempt to cultivate coffee was made by the Scottish Mission (PCEA) at Kibwezi. Unfortunately, the attempted mission was a failure, and the coffee was left to run wild. Holy Ghost Fathers in Bura brought coffee from their Kilimanjaro mission in 1895. The plantations, though, were periodically destroyed by pests. Yet the same Mocha coffee, strains from Aden and Reunion mixed, flour-

ished in the highlands, so much so that the majority of coffee plantations started in the first decade were planted with seed from St. Austin's. Only after half a century could a competitor be found.

Starting with the 100 seedlings brought in 1899, 300 more in 1900, 5000 in 1904, 15,000 in 1910, the number grew to a grand total of 52,000 in 1914. By then many first prizes had been awarded in Nairobi Show and in Nakuru. A transferred official could say: "As regards growth, healthiness and bearing qualities, I have never seen it surpassed in any part of the West Indies."

Water-mills were constructed with a dynamo, irrigation canals dug, coffee machinery imported from France. As Bishop Neville relates: "The berries were plucked, pulped, cured, dried, roasted, ground and brewed. The first cup of Kenya coffee was ready for the test. Had the Mocha coffee preserved its old qualities in its new surroundings? That was the question which Fathers Hémery and Tom Burke and Brother Solanus asked each other. The cup



Fr. Tom Burke, Brs. Lucien, Timothy, Martial and workers, with the coffee-crop picked at St. Austin's, 22 November 1905

was passed around, each taking a sip. Again and again it went around. With eyes sparkling with delight, each gave the verdict: 'It is the best coffee we have ever tasted.'" The experiment was a success. In 1906 the coffee appeared tinned in a Nairobi shop, labelled 'French Mission Coffee,' and was soon being exported to France.

Success brought the crowds. Visitors, day in, day out. Some seeking advice. Some taking photographs. Planters, Agricultural officials, tourists, explorers, hunters, diplomats, ministers of state, royalty; the Aga Khan, the millionaire MacMillans from Donyo Sabuk, the famous or infamous Captain Grogan; on Pentecost Day, 1909, ex-President Theodore Roosevelt of the USA interrupted his hunting expedition to come and see for himself. At a later date, a Parliamentary commission from London visited the Mission to see the 'mother coffee trees' of the country. For a different reason, quite often, the Bessler family came to stay Saturday overnight in order to receive Communion at Sunday morning Mass. The first motor-car drove in just before Christmas, 1906.

There are times of great beauty on a coffee-farm, our Danish visitor tells us. But the Spiritan Brothers, especially Solanus and Martial, added beauty to beauty. Lilac, jacaranda, gum tree, pine, cypress, cedar, cassuarina, wattle, a unique bamboo, mingled with the indigenous forest. Fruit trees also of many kinds mango, loquat, guava, custard apple, peach. In 1910 alone, 9000 trees were added. There were flowers and flowering shrubs too, shady arbours and avenues, with streams, bridges, waterfalls. Some of the Goan community would come to early Mass and spend the day picnicking. Sometimes it seemed as if the whole of Nairobi poured in on a Sunday afternoon, fishing, hunting or lazing under the trees. Sometimes, the mission-residence itself, or more often the kitchen, seemed to be taken over.

The farmyard and stables and workshops were another show-piece. Hens and chickens, ducks, geese, pigs and piglets, cattle producing milk and cheese, draught oxen, sheep and goats, but most prized of all, the foal Kikuyu and its mother Fariji. And what consternation when tragedy struck the beloved Fariji.

After Mass we heard an unusual sound from the stable. We open, and there before us! Fariji our race-horse, the very one about

whom every man in a hat in Nairobi asks about, much more than about P.P. or curate, Fariji who was crowned at the race-meetings, who carried a bishop, Fariji the honour of the monks, the admired of the Wakikuyu, the terror of passers-by, the devourer of space, Fariji, the 'njamba', hero par excellence, Nessus the centaur, half-horse half-man: she is there, four hooves in the air, struggling with some atrocious pain, a pain without name."

Capable of enriching in one day her owner. She is brought out, walked, rubbed, massaged, given cod liver oil, an enema pumped in with soap. Effect nil. The pain is without remedy. Her time has come. And there she is, staggering, falling, collapsing, collapsing in the very middle of the road at the entrance to the garden, the very spot where every day at evening, after a good fill of grass and hay, she came to contemplate so proudly, nostrils in the breeze, ears cocked, hamstrings tensed, the tail slightly drawn in as if to let pass something fragrant and mellifluous. And now, she is no more."

This garden of Eden also had its less welcome visitors: that tiny worm in a beloved horse, a leopard that carried off the Father's dog from his doorstep, baboons who stole his potatoes, snails who invaded the garden, a full hunt on horseback that trampled the young coffee, Maasai who stole cattle, locusts for which the only remedy was prayer. The unfortunate zebra who strayed into the compound and thence, by way of the kitchen, onto the Fathers' supper table was certainly more welcome.

Cardinal Hinsley, who over two years had visited officially most missions in East, Central and West Africa as Apostolic Delegate from Rome in the twenties, said: "The best organised mission, materially and spiritually, that I have met in my visitation, is that of St. Austin's, Nairobi." "A little Arcadia," said Bishop Neville, "with its schools, workshops and churches, a Mission full of happy homes." Fr. Zielenbach, official visitor from the Mother House sealed all with his approval.

Yet, in the opinion of many later commentators, the missionary project of the Holy Ghost Fathers had been a failure! Success had spoiled the main purpose: the evangelization of the Kikuyu people!

To one like the author who has experienced at close quarters over the past twenty years the vibrant Christianity of the Kikuyu

Church, the lively congregations, the dedicated lay leadership, the ardent church-choirs, the enthusiastic clergy, the joyful sisterhoods, the deep spirituality and apostolic vigour of many of its believers, the self-sacrifice of its catechists, the generosity of the Catholic people of Kiambu, it comes as a surprise to learn that the Spiritan missionary project among them was a failure.

Yet, the painstaking and fair-minded scholar, Dr. John Antony Kieran, devotes the 426 pages of his thesis to trying to understand why the heroic efforts of so many devoted missionaries should have been a failure. Failure is assumed. He was writing in the early nineteen sixties, though concerned especially with the time before 1914. The Holy Ghost Fathers are remembered he says, for their schools and their coffee.

Fr. Peadar Kelly, Principal Superior, writing to the Mother House in 1953 laments: "In 50 years not more than 3000 people have been baptised in Kikuyu." Remember that before 1899, the Mill Hill Fathers had already 2000 catechumens, handed over by the White Fathers, not to speak of a host of martyrs in heaven. Bishop Neville who headed the whole Vicariate from 1913, spoke of a ten year barrier of indifference, distrust or hostility. It turned out to be a very long ten years. "Spiritually moribund," someone else said. Fr. Cayzac speaks of the spiritual failure of mission. Fr. Kelly says of St. Austin's: "Though adjoining the Kikuyu reserve, its influence was nil." He adds: "Among a people whose daily cry is for more land, the biggest hindrance to the spread of the Gospel was that we were coffee-growers."

St. Austin's was modelled on Bagamoyo Christian village. This was where the sun-dried remains of Livingstone were brought and coffined in 1873. It should be recalled that the Holy Ghost Fathers had been called initially to East Africa by three Reunion diocesan priests who were trying to cope with those who had escaped being sold into slavery in Zanzibar. The priests advised their Bishop Fava to hand over the work to a religious order, preferably the Spiritans, whose students they had been in Paris. It had been estimated by Livingstone that for every captive offered for sale in Zanzibar market fifty other people had died. A holocaust of half a million people per year in Central Africa. Yet even of those who reached Zanzibar, some were too ill or weak or young to be considered by the Arab trader from Oman. With

funds collected in Europe, the Fathers paid for the release of these captives. They thus escaped being sold into slavery, but how find the way home now, a 1000 miles away in the forests around the great Lakes? All were taken into fosterage, educated, trained, invited to accept the faith of their liberators. Christian families would grow up, craftsmen and catechists be trained. These families would be the centre-point of missionary expansion.

Bishop Le Roy had always advised, when seeking a new site, to choose a well-populated area where one would be welcome, a site large enough to allow the erection of buildings and include land for the settlement of young families. These young liberated families would accompany the pioneer missionary, settle close to him, and form the nucleus of a model Christian village. This ready-made Christian village was delivered on site and was expected to grow by intermarriage with its indigenous neighbours. These were the ‘*enfants de Boura*,’ ‘children of the Mission,’ ‘-Swahili Christians’ we hear about and who had accompanied the missionaries from the beginning. One year after arrival, the first Kikuyu adult is baptised Maria and marries one of our “children,” Florent. The system seemed to work.

Brother Solanus Zipper, mentioned earlier, arrived in November 1899, even though his attempt to get a free ride on the train had failed. He had already spent two years in Tununguo, near Morogoro; then ten years building up the mission-complex in Bura. He would become the mainstay of St. Austin’s over the next 30 years. He also brought a letter from the Bishop urging the Fathers to go ahead with a permanent settlement. (It was not however till 1902 that the Vatican decreed explicitly that the Kedong Valley, the Aberdare range, and the Laikipia Escarpment would be the western boundary of their charge.)

In September 1899, Brother Blanchard had visited Kinyanjui, “a very wealthy and powerful chief in the neighbourhood.” Kinyanjui had invited the missionaries to stay with him and offered houses, fields and workmen. He even gave Brother a gift of a sheep. In November, Blanchard and Solanus visit him again. He is willing to give them some land. After Christmas, they return with Fr. Hémery and show Kinyanjui the land they would like as their definitive location. It is about a mile along the river

from their temporary house. He agrees to go with them straightaway to Mr. Ainsworth and sign the contract of purchase. It is really a gift. They give him five sacks of rice.

Several years before this, Kinyanjui as a young man had saved the life of an Englishman near Fort Smith at Kabete. For this the British always remained grateful to him and named him "Chief." He did not go back on his initial kindness to the Spiritans and testified before a British Government Commission investigating settler abuses in the twenties. "Not every white man has been the friend of the Kikuyu. All have not been like our neighbours, the 'mapadre' of St. Austin's Mission. They helped us in the time of the famine; they were good to us in the time of smallpox. Our people living on their land are happy, for whatever they have taken from us they have given us compensation." In spite of reporting that he was spoken to by Ngai in St. Austin's chapel, and called by name, he himself was never baptised, though several of his offspring were.

The Spiritans had celebrated their first Nairobi Christmas with a well-attended Midnight Mass. New Year's Eve had brought many good wishes, even cakes. Our diarist admonishes himself in Latin: *Vive quasi semper moriturus – live as if always about to die.*

January 1, 1900: Circumcision of Our Lord. Early in the morning, I take off for Nairobi to hear the confession of some Catholics. At 8.30, Mass with singing and accompaniment on the harmonium. There are many Communions.

As Brother Blanchard has a sore foot, and is not able to come to attend the service, he makes up for it in the evening by visiting the sick camp. He baptises four children who are in danger of death. (Early in November, they had brought people to the Railway Hospital for vaccination. But it seems to have been too late for some.)

January 2, 1900: After lunch, visit to our plot to measure it. It is 900 metres long and 200 broad. Tomorrow, we'll start to clear it. (This is the future St. Austin's).

January 4-6, 1900: Work at the definitive location. Ten women cut the undergrowth, another ten carry stones for the temporary house. All under the direction of Brother Solanus. Br. Blanchard with four men starts a new garden at the same place.

January 6, 1900: Epiphany of the Lord. Celebration of the Feast at the Mission, as most of the Catholics are working to-day. It's not worthwhile going down to Nairobi for it.

January 7, 1900: Sunday Mass in town. Being caught by rain, we are late getting back to the Mission.

January 8-9, 1900: Work all day at our permanent location. Every day lunch is brought up there to Br. Solanus so that, being there all the time, he can speed up the operations. Br. Blanchard pays a visit to the sick camp and there baptises seven children in danger of death. The dry season is turning to rain.

January 10, 1900: Rain all day.

January 11, 1900: Received a letter from Fr. Leconte in Bura. Rain. (The year 1900 was to be one of the wettest for a long time, after a decade of droughts).

January 15-16, 1900: Work at the Mission. Brother Solanus on the house and Blanchard in the garden.

January 18, 1900: Visit of Brother Blanchard to the Maasai kraal where the great Maasai chief resides Lenana. On returning by way of the sick camp he baptises four children in danger of death.

"We continue to supply vegetables to the officials of the Railway."

Four months later, work still continues on the house. All their clay bricks have been destroyed by rain. They continue with stone.

Month of May – Month of Mary 1, 1900: We transfer to the new site: May Mary bless the new location and those who will live there. It was not very easy to transfer all our stuff. The Kikuyus don't want to work any more. Nor have we been able to engage any workers from Nairobi.

May 6-13, 1900: The whole week long, work at the Mission to finish our house. Still no fitting place to celebrate the Holy Mass. We are living under canvas. Sunday Mass was of course celebrated in Nairobi. In the afternoon, time off to go fishing in the Nairobi River.

May 13-20, 1900: All the week, work at the Mission. Some are finishing off the two rooms, the others clear the bush from the garden.

May 21, 1900: Church furnishings arrive in boxes by rail.

May 27, 1900: Two rooms are now ready. The Maasai have again tried to steal our mule.

May 28, 1900: St. Austin of Canterbury, Patronal Feast of the Mission. Seeing how poorly we are installed, no great solemnity.

May 29-30, 1900: Work at the Mission: some clearing land, others building a third room.

May 31, 1900: End of the month of Mary.

June 1, 1900: Pentecost Sunday. Service at Nairobi. Afternoon: Ball-game and Fishing.

June 5, 1900: Visit to some Kikuyu villages.

June 22, 1900: We start building a house for the "children of the Mission."

June 24, 1900: Sunday. Br. Solanus catches some fish.

June 25, 1900: Another room ready.

June 26, 1900: We hear that Mr. Ryall, Superintendent of Police, has been killed and eaten by a lion.

June 28, 1900: Visit to Nairobi to buy food. The house for the "children" going ahead rapidly.

July 4, 1900: Brother Solanus attends horse and mule races.

July 5-7: Work at the Mission. Snails continue to devour everything in the garden. Weather very cloudy and cold.

July 9, 1900: Gift of a small ciborium from Zanzibar.

July 15, 1900: Sunday Mass at the Mission because of rain all day. (Priest cannot get there. People cannot get there.)

We hear that Nandi are in revolt and pillaging all caravans to the lake.

July 30-31, 1900: Planting potatoes.

August 1, 1900: Visit to the District Engineer to thank him for timbers sent by him.

August 5-12, 1900: Clearing ground and planting cabbage and kohlrabi. Brother Solanus will attend the spiritual retreat at Bagamoyo. Wine has arrived. Permission from Mr. Bent to use the Institute for Mass every Sunday from 8 till 9.30 a.m.. Plenty of space and chairs.

August 13, 1900: Seven White Fathers arrive at midnight. They cannot continue to Uganda because of Nandi revolt.

Brother visits pori. Plenty of meat to eat.

August 29, 1900: Derailment delays Brother's departure by train. Caravan route still blocked by Nandi.

*September 2: Drought killing everything. Canal not working.
September 7, 1900: Two more rooms added.*

September 16, 1900: Fever. Father cannot go to Nairobi for Sunday Mass.

September 29, 1900: Baptism of first adult Kikuyu. Marries one of our children, Florent. Let's hope others will follow.

October 1, 1900: Plastering two rooms.

October 7, 1900: Take train for Mombasa at 6 a.m. and arrive next morning at 6 a.m.. (Trains are now running at night.)

October 9, 1900: Depart Mombasa with Brother Blanchard, returning to Kikuyu from leave. He has brought seeds and cuttings from France. At Changamwe station, Fr. Puel gives some mango trees.

October 10, 1900: Br. Solanus's abscess has burst at last. The construction of the Mission continues. We have a new mason, Paul, a child of Bura Mission.

October 28, 1900: A Salvation Army commissioner attends Sunday Mass as there is no Protestant service in Nairobi.

October 29, 1900: The Traffic Manager gives me two third-class carriages to send seventy porters to the White Fathers stranded up the line. Nandi still in revolt.

October 31, 1900: Heavy rain all day. Departure for Makindu where the Catholics there have called me for All Souls Day.

November 2, 1900: Service at Makindu. There are fifty Catholics present.

November 4, 1900: Mr. Ainsworth, Vice Consul, returns from Europe.

November 7, 1900: Another room is ready, and in a few days Br. Solanus can occupy it.

The garden is now producing new vegetables thanks to the abundant rains and the persevering activity of Br. Blanchard. The trees brought from Europe are doing well. The same goes for the 100 coffee-trees from Bura.

November 23: The altar is placed in the provisional chapel.

November 28, 1900: Arrival of Fr. Müller. He is to serve Nairobi.

November 29-30: Visiting different villages.

December 3-5, 1900: Visits to local centres to install catechism classes. Continuous rain makes it very difficult.

December 10, 1900: The Goans wishing to have Mass of St. Francis Xavier, Fr. Müller goes to Nairobi to celebrate at the Institute at 8 in the morning.

December 12, 1900: We finish the "House of Parliament" in stone. Inauguration to-morrow.

December 24, 1900: At midnight, Solemn Mass at the Institute. Numerous congregation. Some receive communion. After Mass, "Adeste" sung in harmony.

December 31, 1900: At the Institute, Grand Entertainment and Dance to close the century. We decline the invitation.

End of the Year 1900.

Declina a malo—Fac Bonum

Turn from evil – Do good.

Fr. Alain Hémery CSSp, who has recorded the early days of the Mission for us, was then just under thirty years of age. He has, since his arrival, secured a large plot of land and organised the building of a stone house and the laying out of a garden; he has organised catechism classes for children, has secured food to feed the starving, has organised a Christian community in the nascent Nairobi, has visited the sick, and buried the dead. What he does not mention is that he has been studying the Kikuyu language, and in a few months he will receive the proofs of his book, "Handbook of the Kikuyu Language," just over one year after his arrival. "If we only knew their language," he had confided to his diary. Because of him, we are told, the word *mubia* = Mon Père, entered the Kikuyu language. Before his transfer to Zanzibar in 1903, he will also have translated Bishop Le Roy's catechism into Kikuyu. "Up to us his successors, Fr. Cayzac says, to use and to continue seriously the evangelization of this beautiful country, the pearl of Africa." His dedication is doubly admirable when we consider that he was literally snatched from his Bura Mission by the Bishop at Voi when the original appointee, Jean Ball, took ill and returned to Mombasa.

The two-storey mission residence which we see to-day was built in 1911. The 1900 house served the Spiritans well and their many guests, missionaries passing through or taking a rest, Mill

Hill, Consolata, Missionaries of Africa, CSSP, personal friends. It was demolished to make room for our present church. New, very deep foundations were dug right down to the rock and the foundation stone was laid and blessed by Fr. Louis Bernhard on April 20 1913. To fix the date for posterity, an assortment of coins and medals were wrapped in the current issue of the East African Standard, put in a bottle and buried underneath. Appropriately, at the same time, a new water-driven mechanical system in the coffee factory was also blessed and set in motion "to the admiration of all." It will soon be harnessed to a dynamo to provide electricity.

Bishop Allgeyer is now ill and ready to resign. The new church will be opened and blessed by his successor, Bishop John Neville, its timber and stone drawn from the Mission itself and crafted by Spiritan Brothers and their apprentices. The outstanding quality of their work is still evident today.



Laying and Blessing of Foundation-stone of St. Austin's, 20 April 1913

St. Austin's Homestead had also grown from the "Children's" house of 1900. By 1907, five hundred families were established on the Mission land, "so many annexes of our own family" – "Father's children." At the same time, 150 children attend catechism at three schools on the property. In 1913, a long report to the Mother House gives us the broad picture:

"The different Christian villages are built up on terraces on the slopes facing the Mission, according to the different tribes which comprise them: here Kikuyu, there Swahili (from the Coast), there Kavirondo (Luo from Victoria-Nyanza), the Wachaga (from Kilimanjaro), the Nandi (from up the railway line), the Baganda (from Uganda).

"The Kikuyus are native to the country. They comprise fifteen good families, gathered in a pretty village with round huts, following the fashion of the country. The spirit of these Christians is excellent. Next to them are the Swahili, come for the most part from our orphanages on the Coast. They are good Christians and render precious services, whether in church with the knowledge of singing and ceremonies they have, or in the workshops by their skill in different crafts. Add to these, representatives of half a dozen tribes, that gives us a Christian people which does not lack variety.

"Instruction poses a special difficulty. To Kikuyus, we speak Kikuyu, nothing more natural. With the mass of incomers, we use Swahili, which has become the language of relations between the different tribes. And if most of the missionaries find no difficulty in speaking it correctly, the same does not go for the locals who often know it very poorly and keep no account of the rules of agreement laid down so knowledgeably by Reverend Father Sacleux CSSp.

"For the evangelization of the pagans, we still find ourselves before two very distinct categories: Kikuyus and strangers (*étrangers*). To reach the former, we have first the dispensary and hospital, confided to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, and then, visits in the villages. It is a most thankless operation, for these visits fail to produce the result which the missionary would like to register at once. But they have their undeniable utility, for they keep up good relations between the population and the

Mission, they facilitate access to the sick, dying and prepare the ground for the future. The two Kikuyu catechists, most devoted and always on the job, help us in this work. Among the catechumens, we always have some young men and women who increase bit by bit the number of Christian families in the Kikuyu village. (Remember not much more than fifteen out of five hundred.) Much different are the incomers, the strangers: Kavirondo, Wachaga, etc. They come all by themselves to the Mission, and show a great ardour for instruction."

Thirteen years of St. Austin's journal record periodically the reluctance of the Kikuyu to be evangelized, with prayers and groans interspersed: "*What a deplorable ministry. (Triste ministère!) Our work is an illusion! They attend only if chased after. It is like John the Baptist crying out in the desert.*" When Mass is said for the first time in Kiambu: "*Everything makes us hope that these tenacious pagans, proud and independent, once conquered by grace, will become faithful Christians.*"

We hope that these seven or eight young men, all from neighbouring villages may receive the good seed and become the first fruits of the Church of Kikuyu, but still more, that they may spread the good word at home and give at last the push which we wait for so impatiently." "*Oh! when will come the moment of grace.*"

St. Austin's had three types of school: in primary school, simple literacy was aimed at in the vernacular; in technical school, masonry, carpentry and gardening were taught with a Government grant and exam; thirdly, a primary school was run by St. Joseph of Cluny Sisters, exclusively for non-Africans. The volunteer teacher, Miss Foxley, a recent convert, taught school in Riruta, while living in what was to become St. John the Baptist mission.

The 1914-18 war now intervened. "An immense disaster" our diarist, Fr. Bernhard, says, not only for the world at large, but for the Mission. Many missionaries were called up, others volunteered as chaplains, others were interned as enemy aliens, a hundred skilled workmen were pressed into the Armed Forces. The volunteer architect of St. Austin's, a friendly Protestant, Stanley I.D. Curnow, died in the Tanganyika campaign. St. Austin's has its own little war when on New Year's Day, 1915, a football match between Kikuyu and Kavirondo turns into a pitched bat-

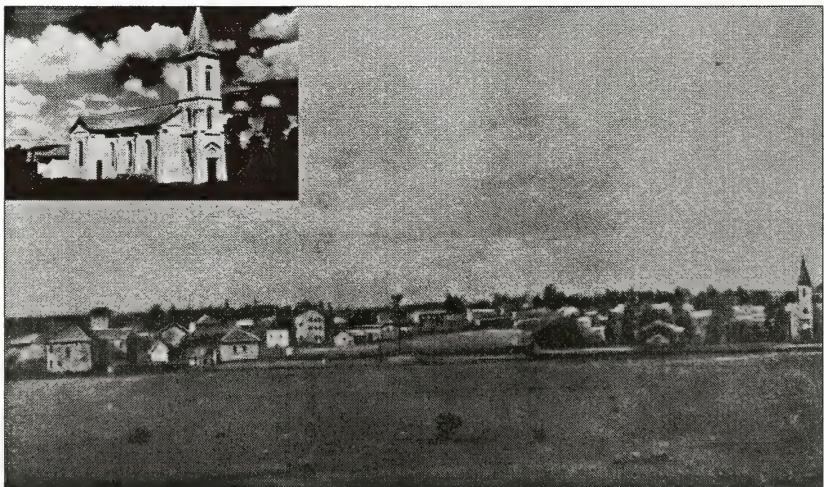
tle! Worse news for the Homestead was the projected law, mooted ten years before, to reduce the legal number of families on any farm to five. In the new church, a subscription among African Christians puts in a stained-glass window of St. Peter Claver. The Irish put St. Patrick. Craftsmen continue to show their skill with a beautifully worked timber high altar. It bears the crest of the Holy Ghost Congregation. Gangaranu, a Hindu, presented a beautiful carpet.

Coffee is still being planted. In 1915, large new nurseries are laid out. In 1917, 10,000 coffee-trees are planted. But 1918 brought disaster. No harvest. Trees sucked dry by aphides ("thrips").

Chapter Three

HOLY FAMILY PARISH, NAIROBI (1899-1918)

Knock it down! the official said. "I don't understand. What do you mean?" the French priest replied. Alphonse Kuhn CSSp, missionary and master-builder, had just completed his assignment: a church and a residence for the new parish of Nairobi. No one had complained of the beautiful cathedral on Zanzibar Island or the fine stone church which towered up behind him now. What could be wrong with the new Fathers' house?



1. *View of Nairobi about 1910 from Upper Hill shows Holy Family Church; among trees, school, convent and residence.*
2. *Inset: a later photograph of Holy Family Church.*

He looked blankly again at the English official barking at him and repeated, for his command of the language was not great:

"Monsieur, I am not strong in English, I do not understand."

"Démolir.... Demolish.... Knock it down." The official gestured with his file of papers. "You have broken all the regulations." The year was 1907, the date July 31st. And it had taken only two months to build!

It was eight years since the first three Holy Ghost Fathers had set up their tent not very far from the building site in the camp-site, to which all new arrivals used to be directed. The "Waswahili" Christians who had got off the train with them helped them light a fire, set up their tents, and prepare a meal. Night with its mystery surrounded them, and the scattered lights and camp-fires around them hid the dismal huts and sheds about them, yet emphasised the great dark mass of the nearby Kikuyu forest to the North. They believed that they had been called by the Lord Jesus Christ to make His name known to the Kikuyu people. But the Lord would surprise these "missionaries of Kikuyu" by raising up another people, which they would call together and serve: the people of Nairobi. Already, the rumour had spread among the Catholics in the nearby staff-quarters: Sunday Mass at the railway station tomorrow morning.

As the morning brightened, they gathered expectantly. Someone had swept out one of the sheds near the railway line. A table was put against the wall. The Bishop's box is opened. A cloth laid. Candles lit. "*Introibo ad altare Dei*," the Bishop intoned, "I will go to the altar of God, the God who gives joy to my youth." It was the Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost. Father Hémery read the gospel: "*Beati oculi qui vident quae vos videtis* – Blessed are the eyes, which see what you see." Jesus Christ had come to lay claim to the Kikuyu, but those who were now receiving Him and His blessing were all strangers and foreigners. Bishop Allgeyer dedicated the holy project to the Blessed Virgin Mary and invited all back for Mass on the Feast of her Assumption in two days' time. Another stranger, Ali Mishram provided a big tent the following Tuesday. When the Bishop visits the Chief Engineer of the Railway, still another stranger who controlled all lands and leases for a mile on each side of the track, he already has the site for a Catholic church marked on his map. Fr. Hémery will visit

the site with a rail official early the following year. By the end of 1900, a plan will be ready, but they have only 3000 of the 10,000 rupees required. For seven years, Mass will be celebrated regularly in or about the railway-station in a shed or office or at the Institute.

So, for lack of funds the site was not developed immediately. Then the Railway Company had its powers over land severely reduced. Still, Mr. Ainsworth, the British Vice-Commissioner, after many delays, approved the allocation of the site in 1903. But, within a few months, the approval is revoked. Reason: it is too near the site which by now has been allocated for a Protestant church! Not for the first time does our diarist evoke the French saying: "*Oh, the perfidy of Albion,*" as he complains of the English to his pages and to us. "*Oh what chicanery, subterfuges and pretexts the Government causes us in giving us land which did not belong to them in the first place! They claim the Protestants and Catholics will fight!*" Our writer is astonished, for in fact, relations between Catholic and Protestant have been excellent. There had been many friendly exchanges between St. Austin's and Kabete (Anglicans) or Kikuyu (Scottish Mission), and any misunderstandings resolved amicably.

Fortunately, the newly-arrived Governor, Sir Donald Stewart, is so impressed by St. Austin's that he gives the go-ahead, and even attends Mass at the makeshift chapel at the Railway. Funds are now sufficient to start. Fr. Kuhn, Br. Simon and four masons arrive and immediately start shifting stones from St. Austin's. They can use the railway along Waiyaki Way to move stones and red clay and lime right down to the site of thick black-cotton soil. A semi-swamp stretches on one side towards the railway-station, where later the seat of Government would rise. The Post Office is a small building 100m. away on the other side. By January 1905, the two Spiritans are living in mabati huts on site, and work commences. At the end of February, our diarist is talking not just of a chapel or church but the "New Cathedral!" Could he have dreamt that in the not too distant future, a million people would gather round the Pope for Mass just where he gallops off on his horse across the country-side. Rather, was he wondering how to replace the 240 Rupees missing from the workshop.

By the third week of March, the long rains have begun, turning the whole of the township into a morass. However, Sunday the 19th dawns clear. Bishop Allgeyer has come again from Zanzibar and is ready for Pontifical High Mass and the blessing of the foundation stone. Fr. Kuhn and Br. Simon have the site beautifully decorated. After the service, the heavens open (Baraka!), and they return drenched to St. Austin's. "Dinner, or rather breakfast at 2 p.m."

A year later, the East African Standard (18.8.1906) reports:

"Last Sunday, August 12, the new Roman Catholic Church was inaugurated and High Mass celebrated there for the first time. The sacred ceremony was celebrated by the Reverend Father Thomas Burke, assisted by Reverend Father Bugeau. The church was richly adorned with flowers and garlands, thanks to the untiring devotion of Mrs. Sandford, Mrs. Gayzal, and the Misses Gallagher, McLean, Gayzac and Rangel. The congregation heard a most touching sermon, preached by Rev. Fr. Burke, who did not fail to express his thanks to all those who so powerfully assisted him in the construction of the new church. The congregation was considerable. Not one Roman Catholic from Nairobi was missing.

It should be remarked that this fine edifice in its entirety is the work of the Fathers and Brothers of the Catholic Mission."

They were the same touching tones of the Irish Spiritan which had charmed the Rupees out of the purses and pockets of his parishioners (at one time, one whole month's salary) and from other well-wishers too.

A few days later the keys of the Institute were returned to the Rail Authorities. It was in that hall that the small community of 120 had grown to maturity with its strong lay leadership and Spiritan pastors: Fr. Hémery, Fr. Müller, Fr. Cayzac, Fr. Burke. It was, of course, a community which had all the usual needs:

Its infants had to be baptised as that of Gracias on the evening of 26 May 1901. It was Pentecost Sunday, but Fr. Hémery, even though he had started out, had not been able to make it for Mass in the morning because of torrential rains. Another time the priest is stranded at the Station and cannot get back to the Mission. Two weeks before, he had complained: "*Very few at Mass. Im-*

possible to cross this plain full of mud. When shall we ever have proper streets?" On April 21 the same chant: "Few present. The continual rains of last week have made roads impassable. The town is like a marsh. Round the Institute where the service is held, there is an invasion of frogs and toads who fill the air with a not totally unharmonious music. We are told the railway bridge over the Athi has been knocked down and the line washed away over several miles." Once an entire locomotive disappeared into the mud! On the 21st of July, after Mass, Fr. Cayzac arrives by train, (he is coming from his post at St. Mary's, Dublin). At the same time, word arrives from Mr. Scothem, station-master at Kedong up the line, that he needs his infant baptised. The parish priest and the new arrival both jump on the same train and go off to baptise the child. The infant of Mr. Coulson appropriately was baptised on the 25th of December.

There were also infants who died. There were adults who died. There were sick to be visited at home or in hospital. There was the prison also, and sometimes executions. There were individual converts to be instructed. Then there were the big feast days. From the beginning in 1899, Midnight Mass was celebrated at Christmas. Lent and Holy Week gradually built up. There was also from the beginning the great patronal and national feast of Goa, St. Francis Xavier, with the hall marvelously decorated. There was the Immaculate Conception for the Sodality, special Masses requested by a family or a group (with breakfast afterwards at the Station Buffet). Another day, Madras Catholics have a High Mass. There were confessions on Saturdays. In fact, Fr. Cayzac, soon after his arrival, would go and stay in town from Saturday afternoon till Monday morning. There was also the Rosary and Benediction on Sunday afternoon with 100 people present. Singing improves when Miss Moore takes over. There are confraternities, especially the Children of Mary for young men, and annual retreats, sometimes to be given in Concani. There is the indefatigable church-building committee collecting money, organising concerts. There is, finally, Father Burke who had arrived in December 1903 and before the month was out had visited all bungalows to collect for the new church. In his letter to the Superior General he writes:

"We have here a splendid parish. Each Sunday more than 200 people at Mass: communions are numerous."

Many attributed the fervour of the Goan Community to the strong family life which had sustained them even before the Holy Ghost Fathers arrived.

The first marriage in the new church was solemnised on October 24, 1906, two months after the opening. In November, the title "Holy Family" is mentioned for the first time. Midnight Pontifical High Mass for Christmas crowded the new church. "*A splendid success. Music first class. Everything in fine order. Bishop, priests and people, all highly pleased. Weather very fine.*" Fr. Burke reports happily. Before celebrating the patronal feast in January, he goes down the line to meet up to 100 of his scattered flock with "lions and leopards by the dozen." He visits several sick people, celebrates Mass, and baptises two infants. It was to be a busy and successful beginning for the New Year: he settles land-matters in St. Austin's, where harvests of coffee and beans are a record. Coffee is roasted and ground for the first time in quantity, their horse 'Kikuyu' wins a "glorious race", prize 250 Rupees. The diary abounds with words like "successful," "pleasant," "enjoying immensely," "good news," "everybody pleased," "receives a present of two beautiful canaries." However, the most successful celebration in Holy Family in 1907 will be his own funeral.

His successor, Fr. Goetz, wrote to the Superior General: "A cruel trial for us has been the death of the beloved Fr. Burke, on 18 September. That death, for which we should have been prepared came to strike suddenly, so much did the energy of the Father leave us with the illusion of strength. An old enemy TB, had been undermining him; but his zeal increased as his strength diminished. Fr. Burke made use of such suppleness of spirit, such delicacy in his dealings with people, he was in a word, so good and kind that he made our holy faith loved, in a city of temples, mosques and pagodas, where Protestantism is at home and Catholicism a stranger. His death brought universal mourning. The town closed down, and an immense crowd of Europeans and Goans accompanied him to his last resting place. 'That death has been a public tragedy,' the Governor declared."

The previous year, as Superior of St. Austin's, Fr. Burke had supervised the laying out, fencing and embellishment of a cemetery. The occasion had been the death of Jude, a Christian stone-mason from Zanzibar. Now all these mourning Nairobians who are so engrained with apartheid that they refuse not only a common school but a common graveyard for Nairobi, will see their pastor laid to rest beside the humble Jude, who had escaped the slave-ships to Oman.

During his life, however, Tom Burke had not sought such a close relationship with 'Father's Homestead'. In spite of his disability he had volunteered for the 'African mission.' On arrival, he had called the influx of settlers a veritable invasion. But he himself cultivates the company of these very invaders unceasingly and seems in a few months to have absorbed their bias and prejudices. It might be forgetfulness, but at no point is it reported that any African mourned his passing. He had come to a point where, while resting at a remote settler's home, he cannot understand the ardour of his confrère, Paul Leconte, scouring the bare Ukamba Hills looking for those "precious ones." In contrast, when some years later, Fr. Anton Vogel dies suddenly far from his flock on Mombasa Island, the African Christians of Nairobi fill Holy Family, and the large crowd follows his remains to St. Austin's.

The month before he died, Fr. Burke was able to get a reprieve for the Holy Family residence. It would serve them for twenty years, till the present residence was built in 1926. Fr. Kuhn, because of his lack of English, goes to live at St. Austin's, but in early 1909, he takes on another building assignment, this time in Madagascar. Fr. Pierre Goetz, because of his knowledge of English, is recalled from the USA and appointed to Nairobi. Br. Solanus stays on with him. There is still a school and a convent to be built.

The new pastor must now learn Swahili. Among his 800 Catholics, there are 100 from Uganda or Tanganyika, but also there is a growing number of local people, especially Luos, who want to prepare for Baptism. He starts with a dozen, but soon it has grown to 70, and he then gets another priest, the ill-fated Joseph Loos. Later, on being transferred to Giriama, Fr. Loos is killed by snake-bite. At Nairobi soon twenty catechumens will be reborn in the waters of Baptism. Fr. Goetz is happy. He reports: "Our faithful are

very attached to us and love us. Even the Protestants lose their prejudices." Fr. de Sa, a Holy Ghost Father from Zanzibar, comes to stay for a month. There is the ordination to the priesthood of an Italian Trinitarian from Kismaiyu by Bishop Allgeyer; Bishop Geyer of Khartoum attends. Bishop Hanlon and several Mill Hill Fathers visit, and several White Fathers.

In the year 1907, Nairobi was declared capital of the British Protectorate. The Administration with its many officials moved from Mombasa. Settlers are arriving continually. This "busy, thriving and animated township" continues to grow upwards with new buildings and outwards with new suburbs towards Parklands and Muthaiga. There is a fire-brigade, and also electric streetlighting. However, some areas are quite wretched, especially round the Bazaar. There are epidemics of typhoid, meningitis, smallpox. Plague broke out in 1911, 1912, 1913. In that last year, Fr. Cayzac, now in charge and also Principal Superior of the Spiritans, reports:

"Many changes have taken place here. The town of Nairobi has been enormously enlarged, the number of our faithful has risen in proportion. Happily, the religious spirit itself seems to grow stronger. Besides Goans, there are many born in Asia of mixed races. These seem less fervent though strongly attached to the Catholic faith. We have also a great many from Europe, Irish and others, of whom some are really good Christians. Since two years the African element has grown considerably, though it is composed of people foreign to these parts, coming from other lands, from Uganda and Kavirondo, especially. These latter seem most particularly eager for instruction. There are some who come from morning till night, and among them not the least interesting certainly are the workers who, at the end of the day, before taking rest or food, come demanding an hour's instruction".

"One thing one must deplore. When the church was built, it was thought sufficient for the needs of the people. No one suspected such a rapid increase in the population. Today the church is jammed full, even though three masses are said every Sunday, and that at the last, many must be content to have some space outside in front of the door. (On

Good Friday as many outside as inside.) Even many Protestants like to come to our services, especially at Christmas and Easter".

"The Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, who run the school for our Goan children and others, have had a large, healthy house built for them. They may now be able to take in boarders. We have, besides, another school for nearly one hundred pupils, mostly from Kavirondo".

"A glance at our statistics: 1911: 55 Baptisms; 1912: 71; 1913 up to July: 57."

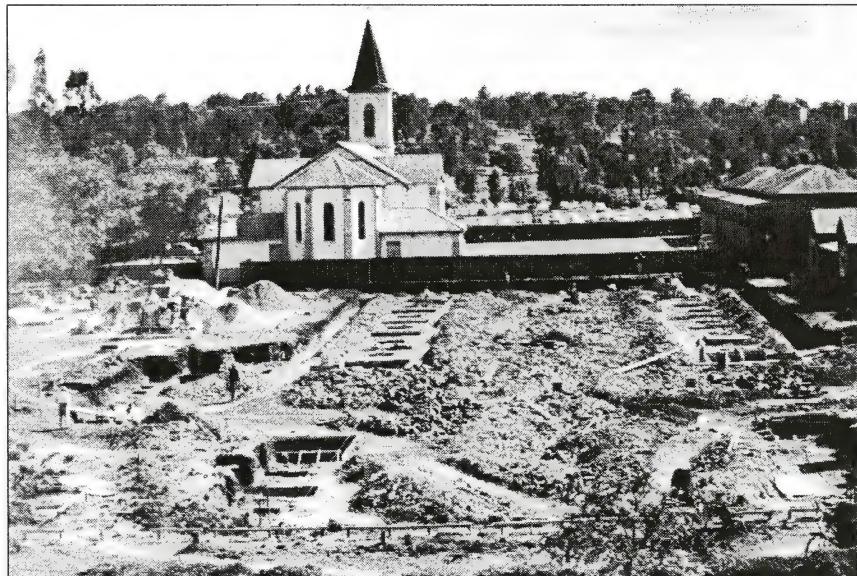
The new Bishop, John Gerard Neville, is received with great pomp and enthusiasm in March 1914. Ali Mishram shows him round in his automobile. Emile Allgeyer, his predecessor, the seemingly tireless apostle of Christ, at nearly 60 years of age has resigned. Without sacrificing one whit of principle, "being all things to all," he could be called by an Englishman, "one of the most popular men throughout the Protectorate." After the war he will volunteer to work as a simple priest in the Usambaras in Tanganyika, till illness forces him to retire a little before his death in 1924.

As the World War begins in August 1914, Joseph Fleck CSSp is parish priest and diarist. It is he who receives the gift of the statue of the Holy Family. War fever speeds up the pace of life in Nairobi. The pace of pastoral life speeds up accordingly. There are new military hospitals to be visited. The Carrier Corps hospital. New military garrisons and camps. There are hundreds of soldiers at Mass, and South African nurses from Muthaiga Hospital. Catholic soldiers from India ask for confession. There are new prisons; scores of Bura Catholics are there, suspected of spying. In 1916, from the Concentration Camp for Germans, Lutheran lady-missionaries beg for Mass at Christmas. Fr. Fleck gets spun out. The young Fr. Gogarty arrives.

There is a stream of visitors: chaplains to the Forces, White Fathers, Mill Hillers, Consolata. All are at once coopted for the ministry. Bishop Biermans telegraphs; arriving train with live lion and leopard! Fr. Goetz returns after some years of absence. Fr. de Sa gives retreats. The Luo catechumens are growing in numbers, and their catechism classes and their chant fill the verandas of the Fathers' house all day. In the diary all this is interspersed with

up-to-date and detailed reports of the war-fronts, of the confrères' and visitors' varied illnesses, and of more and more frequent ministerial dashes up the new railwayline to Thika and Donyo Sabuk and Kabaa, or down to Maboko, Kiu, Kima, Magadi, Sultan Hamud, Makindu, Voi and Bura, now perforce abandoned. All three Precious Blood Sisters, having been expelled by the colonial authorities from Bura, had died tragically from typhoid.

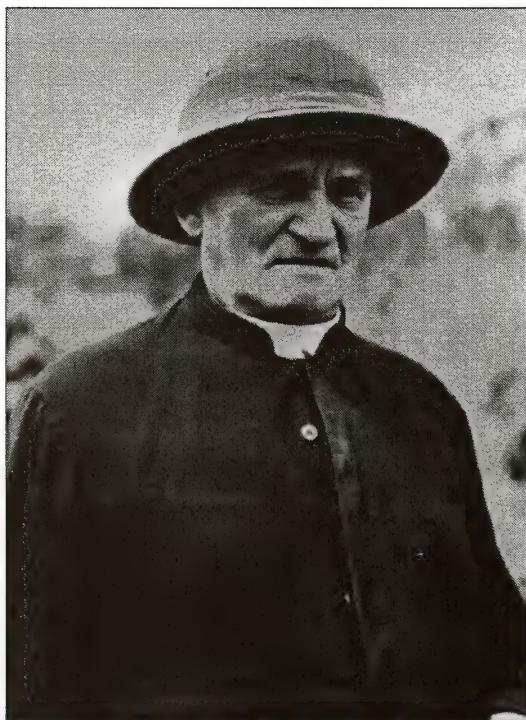
The Declaration of an emergency gives the colonial regime much more clout. No longer do we read any criticisms of the Government as formerly. The Carrier Corps conscription law raises no highbrows. The 1915 Ordinance declares all land occupied by Africans "Crown Land"; and another measure would force all African men to register and carry passes. The apartheid zoning of the town is reinforced – in fact, African people are forced to live outside the town proper. Our diarists are silent. The 'protectorship' or 'protectorate' of the indigenous peoples of East Africa is forgotten and they are set against each other with modern weapons. 150,000 Africans die in the Tanganyika campaign, according



Holy Family, just before it was demolished in 1963

to Fr. Bernhard, among them two of his ‘children’ from St. Austin’s press-ganged into the Carrier Corps. At the same time, the master-races are still slaughtering each other savagely by millions in Europe.

The post-war years bring a British Parliamentary Commission to examine abuse of the colonial system. But in general, the Fathers have now acquiesced in the system; they keep quiet, just happy not to be accused themselves. A Protestant group asks them to sign a petition. They refuse. Fr. Bernhard even gives us a long two-page apologia for the system. The only dissenter, it seems, is his predecessor as Religious Superior, Fr. Cayzac. In his satiric diatribe, innocently entitled “The Mission Boy – a Romance of Modern Africa,” he castigates all the players on the stage: official and settler, missionary and convert, Kikuyu collaborator and Kikuyu traditionalist. These are “the problems of civilisation which the European occupation must bring to the African state.”



*Br. Josephat
Novicki
Master-builder*

Nairobi Diocese with Mission-Stations

+ Galanga

+ Kereita
Kagwe+

+ Mangu
+ Kiriku

Klima Mbogo +
+ Thika

+ Ngarariga
+ Thigio

+ Limuru
+ Riruta

+ Githunguri
+ Miguta

All Saints
Riara +
+ Tingang'a
+ Kiambu

Kaniga +
+ Lioki

+ Gaituu

+ Kahawa
+ Kikuyu

+ Ruaraka

+ Kariobangi

NAIROBI
St A.

E.
P.
H.F. St P.C.I.

+ Riruta

M.
Karen +

St A - St Austin
P. - Parklands
E. - Eastleigh
H.F. - Holy Family
St P.C.I. - St Peter Claver
M. - Makadara

+ Ngong
+ Kiserian

+ Athi River

Chapter Four

AFRICAN CATHOLIC MISSION OF SAINT PETER CLAVER 1918

Nairobi, 12 December 1922

My Lord and Very Reverend Father General,

"Behold, I announce to you a great joy" – It seems to me that I cannot better start this letter, than by these words of the angel; for I also have to announce to you an event awaited for long years: that is, the solemn inauguration of the new Mission of



Baptism of 106 adults at Holy Family Church

St. Peter Claver's for the African population of Nairobi. It was on 19 November that Bishop Neville proceeded to the blessing of the new Chapel and school. At last my most ardent desires have been fulfilled; we have a church which can easily hold twelve hundred people and, in case of necessity, two thousand. It is not excessive for the capital of Kenya. The Catholic religion at last, thanks to our bishop and to our kind contractor, the popular Brother Josaphat, has a pastoral centre worthy of its African people and of the great progress it has made in our District over the past few years.

Obediently yours in Christ,
Jules Blais CSSP

Building a separate African church might seem nowadays a very backward step. In 1920, it had become a necessity! The extraordinary growth of the Luo catechumenate at Holy Family Parish had made the urgency of development only too clear. In 1907, a dozen had grown to 70. Ten more years multiplied that by ten. During the war-years, Fr. Goetz, the PP, who had come to Nairobi from an Afro-American parish, sees himself forced, for lack of space, to exclude catechumens from Sunday Mass; they meet for Instruction at 2 p.m. with the Father. When Jules Blais is appointed "*Curé des Noirs*," the Africans' parish priest, he will find his Christian community as it expands, again for lack of space, excluded from the great once-only feasts of Holy Week or Christmas Midnight Mass. He knows, of course, that they alone would jam-pack the church to overflowing as he describes: not only seats, but all aisles, sanctuary, choir-loft and stairway, porch and doorway, and yet more outside! The building was planned for only three to four hundred people.

Besides, the colonial power had gradually pushed all African living quarters outside the town proper. A new church would have to be close to their homes. A site had already been applied for in 1916, when the so-called "new native village" had been mooted. In October 1918, the Bishop was asked to specify the plot desired. Within a month, the plot was agreed on by the authorities. But in spite of repeated requests, the information was withheld till three years later and work authorised to begin only in January 1922!

Fr. Blais had learnt his Swahili during his initial three years in Pemba Island, near Zanzibar. He first appreciated the openness of the Luo people to Christ and His message during his stay at Kabaa. While the native Kamba were hostile, these immigrant workers from Kavirondo built the new mission installations, became Christians and established Christian families. The community journal entitled "*Mission of St. Peter Claver's at Nairobi*," is the story, not only of the journey of Jules Blais up and down the Uganda Railway, but into the hearts of this migrant people.

Père Blais arrived by train from Kabaa and Thika on 27 February 1918 at 10.30 a.m. A large group of Luos had gathered to welcome him, "*and these good friends gave him an enthusiastic reception, a good sign for the future.*" He immediately took responsibility for his functions and, at Mass next day, offered the new mission to the good God. He is happy to put himself under the protection of St. Peter Claver, the great apostle to black people, and begs for the same 1

love and zeal which had filled the Saint. "*Opus fac evangelistae – do the work of an evangelist.*" Very soon he calls together a representative committee of elders to help him. This committee will be his great support always.

He has quoted St. Paul. "In journeyings often" is another word of Paul's that could describe his ministry. He has been given charge of the African mission in Nairobi and surroundings: Pangani, Mbagathi, "Mombasa," Pumwani, Electric Camp, Ruaraka, Kiltannon, Karura, Kasirini, Mathare, Kahawa Station, Dagoretti and Ngong (a four-hour walk); in all, about twelve catechetical schools. But his ministry also includes all the workers in the shambas along the railway-line up to a distance of 220 km from Nairobi. Within reach of the Thika line will spring up chapel-schools, at Sukari, Ndundi, Murera, Kianjibi, a farm near Ruiru, Kalimoni, Juja Farm, Ndarugu, near Mangu, Thika itself, and others farther afield at Munyu, Gatua Nyaga, Mukawa, Donyo Sabuk or Kilima Mbogo, Ndula. He will follow the Northern line to Kikuyu Station, and to the South all the way to Voi, and finally, the new line to Magadi Salt Lake. Quite a programme.

As soon as he is officially installed in his ministry, a multitude of demands are made on him. A deputation of 17 policemen

come asking to be taught at their Depot. A warder arrives, saying that 12 people in their quarters need instruction. Now 40 policemen repeat that they and twenty of their wives need a teacher. He begins visiting the Electric Co. quarters, Pangani and "Mombasa" villages. On Sundays, his Christians take up half the church, and for the afternoon catechism and Benediction, the church is packed.

The end of March, Easter Day, saw scattered members of his new flock coming in for Mass from Ngong, Thika, Kiu, Ulu, Athi River and Machakos. He knows now he must visit them and leaves by train on April 1, for what his confrères will call "his beloved Maboko," a sisal estate near Athi River railway station. Though only twenty miles or so from Nairobi on the railway line, Fr. Blais had opened a small school there from Kabaa, at the suggestion of his Luo converts. It had 35 Christians and 80 catechumens. In one month, the catechumenate will double in number. While waiting for his tent to arrive, he spends the night walking to Machakos, 25 miles away, to check on a small catechetical post there at the police station. Kitui askaris, come from 60 miles away, at once ask him to visit them there. Impossible now. He spends another night tramping back to Athi River, and being caught in rain and mud, does not arrive till 10 a.m. the next day.

Later in the year, Br. Theodomir and his workmen will help him build a small chapel-school with a private room. The Manager, Mr. Burrows, and his two assistants are most cooperative. The Christians have cut thatch for the building. They send carts to bring the 168 bundles and promise water for the mud-plastering. They supply extra timbers for the walls which are soon in place. Fr. Blais must dash to Nairobi for weekend ministry. Inbetween times, he had organized the people to make an altar-station for the Corpus Christi procession at Holy Family with flowers brought by themselves and a coloured sawdust carpet.

Now, at Maboko the building is being thatched. Rain slows down the work. He is instructing catechumens and confessing the Christians for the feast of All Saints. A letter from Nairobi reminds him that he is needed again for the weekend ministry. His part-time assistant Fr. Gogarty is sick. But it is an epidemic –

the Spanish Flu of 1918. He must stay in Nairobi to serve the hospital. Two of his Luo converts have died, Aloisio Okulu from Kabaa, and Isidore Okumu from Thika. He must sing a Requiem Mass for them. By November 6, he is back at Maboko, floor and walls are plastered. He can sleep in his little room. After that, he must leave them till the epidemic has passed, for now both Fathers in St. Austin's are ill. November 11, 1918 is Armistice Day. The war in Europe is over. Thank God.

On December 8, he is back at Maboko to dedicate the chapel and the work to Mary Conceived Immaculate. After Mass, he blesses the graves of the four Christians who have died of influenza since his last visit. Besides the chapel, there is also a separate hut for the principal teacher; there are small school-buildings at the machine-workers' camp, a special building for Luos of Manyala tribe, and a third at the shamba-workers camp. There are six teachers. With them, he identifies those to be baptized in the New Year. Back in Nairobi, the Land Office wantd to cut a strip off the not-yet-accorded plot to make a road! Also, another epidemic: smallpox. 150 people are in quarantine. December 25, his people are excluded from the Midnight Mass. No room at the inn. Not really wonderful for Christmas. Back at Maboko in the New Year, over one week he closely prepares 22 catechumens for Baptism with late-evening instructions. Two others, baptized during the epidemic, can join them for First Communion. A beautiful day's work. Back again at Holy Family, the first printed copies of a reading primer he had prepared have arrived "*Masomo ya Kwanza*".

But now he heads out towards Thika in the opposite direction. Getting up at 3 a.m., he can take the 5.15 train. And basing himself at the White Sisters' convent near Mangu, he calls a meeting of Christian workers from the surrounding estates. Then he finds nearly 40 catechumens, mostly Luo, at Ndarugu Estate, 90 minutes walk from Thika. They will need a permanent teacher. Near Thika railway-station, the Sisal Estate has quite a few Christians but not many catechumens. At a coffee-estate, four to five hours walk from Thika, near the mountain Donyo Sabuk (the future Kilima Mbogo mission), there are 40 Christians and 70 catechumens needing instruction. Back in Nairobi, the Manager of B.E.A. Fibre at Kibwezi and Masongaleni invites him to estab-

lish teachers and schools for 1000 workers there. A deplorable accident at Stony-Athi: a woman who with her husband wanted to sign on for work and have the opportunity to prepare for Baptism, is drowned while trying to cross the swollen river. At Nairobi, in the meantime, attendance at Swahili Sunday Mass has doubled. The church is full.

What is striking about these pastoral journeys is the extraordinary cooperation of the estate-owners, managers and railway officials. At Donyo Sabuk, the Manager, Mr. Lindsay offered to build a church, a school and a house for the priest, and was ready quite often to collect him by car at Thika. Mr. Burrows at Athi River often sends a car to collect him at the station to save him the hour's walk to the shamba, and once on a very rainy muddy day, it took a cart and eight oxen to do the trip. Many invited him to lunch, to stay the night. At Kalimoni, Mr. Burrell insisted he take all meals at his place, including gatecrashing his wife's birthday party. It was there at Kalimoni that this General Manager of a Swedish Company gave a stone house for a school, a plot for a Father's house, a salary promised for a resident priest, and if Sisters agreed to come, a hospital would be built and Sisters paid. The Wetter family, fervent Catholics and owners of Mukawa (the future site of Kilima Mbogo mission) give him "a magnificent reception," and he says Mass with them in their house. In between, he visits their staff, examining catechumens and hearing Confessions. All these and other kindnesses are reported by Fr. Blais; they show, as he says, "that all the Europeans are not against the missions."

The Railway officials are equally welcoming. Arriving for the first time in Kajiado, he spends the night at the Uganda Railway Rest-house. Next day, the inspector of the line brings him by official trolley to the fuel camp he must visit. The school there is a rehabilitated cowshed given by the Indian owner. A good thorn-fence protects from lions. A fuel-train will get him back to the mainline. At Kiu, later, the station-master turns the restaurant into a hotel overnight for the Bishop.

The pupils' response is also magnificent, always calling out for a resident teacher or a visit from the priest; at Ulu Station they want to force him to get off the train and visit them. At Thika

Ranch, “he can hardly tear himself away from the arms of the Christians and catechumens who would have kept him there.” They will meet him at the station to carry his loads. At Makindu, a Governor’s welcome! At mile 38 from Magadi, triumphal welcome from wood-cutters, marble-workers, karanis. At Toroka, the workers make a new altar from marble. They come for Mass and instruction, sometimes three hours before work early in the morning, or stay late at night, sometimes up to eleven o’clock; some walk really long distances for Sacrament preparation or simply to visit, giving often their off-days and Sundays, even contributing from their pittance of a salary. Each station he must leave with regret. “What a very beautiful day, so consoling, but I suppose a bit wearing,” catechising, instructing, counselling, discussing – he has prepared and baptised 61 catechumens. Not surprisingly, he has had dizzy spells during the week. But they also have tried, coming from Sultan Hamud, Ulu, Kiu, Nairobi and even Thika to Athi River. That was May 12, 1919. Next month, they will all be back again when the Bishop confirms 106.

There is no explicit mention of community formation. We see it taking place, however, with the choice of leaders, spontaneous meetings, common projects in each of the little groups. How closely knit they have become is revealed when they are broken up! No more timber to be cut for fuel. A contract finished. Shamba is closing. So, he sees regretfully the little community at Kima dispersed; luckily he can direct many of them to Makindu. Worst of all is the closing down of Maboko in March 1922. There has been a long drought, the sisal has failed. Again, Fr. Blais can direct many to other estates that need labour. As the bulk of the workers head off, he holds on to prepare one last group for Baptism. The manager at Donyo Sabuk very kindly sends an ox-cart to collect church-furnishings. *“It is the end, the end of a beautiful era. Let us hope the new one to begin at Donyo Sabuk may have a more glorious and more fruitful and also a longer reign.”* It now has 150 Christians and catechumens. It will open as Immaculate Conception Mission, Kilima Mbogo, in 1926 with a resident priest, Jules Blais himself. Ironically, as he leaves Maboko for the last time, the rains have come. The flooded river blocks

his way to the railway-station, and seven people who have come looking for work want to be enrolled for catechism.

It must be said that this fervent Spiritan missionary, nicknamed "Ayot" fire, barely recognised the injustice with which the people he loved are treated; yet he insists that he inculcates into them sentiments of justice. The majority of these Luo workers had been uprooted from their lakeside homes and thrown at the mercy of Indian and British business. It is precisely such evils that Harry Thuku and his East African Association were agitating against. It was in that very same March 1922 that the colonial police shot down scores of people protesting Harry Thuku's arrest in Nairobi. Jules Blais' royalist ancestors had suffered too much from revolutionaries in France, so that he feels no sympathy for "this agitator." When the heir-pretender to the French throne visits Nairobi, he will go with some like-thinking confrères to pledge his loyalty! His confrere, Joseph Cayzac, thought otherwise and asks in his parable of Thuku: "Could he be decently deported for the principles of true democracy, for which ten million white men had just sacrificed their young lives?"

Jules Blais, in July 1922, regretfully left "those admirable children of the schools along the line." His friend, Paul Leconte, is fatally ill with dropsy. He has lost by death one of his best teachers in Nairobi, Francis Agaye, a Maragoli, fluent in Luhya, Luo and Swahili. "*C'est ainsi la vie.*" That's life.

But the new mission building is under way. Begun in May, with Brother Josaphat's usual expedition, by the last day of July it is ready for roofing. The building still stands to-day in 1998 with the cross in the centre blessed on that day. But even without a roof, the classrooms will be used to prepare for confirmations, and on August 13, he will present 230 of his Christians to Bishop Neville – still in Holy Family. Still in Holy Family for the feast of St. Peter Claver, Bishop Neville celebrates the 6 a.m. Mass and is surprised to see the church full on a week-day. 300 receive Communion. A relic of St. Peter Claver is exposed all day. "May St. Peter Claver take us under his protection." A fortnight later, he has the pleasure of welcoming his new collaborator, Fr. Michael Witte, newly-ordained and newly-arrived from Holland. They have 700 Catholics registered in their care, and

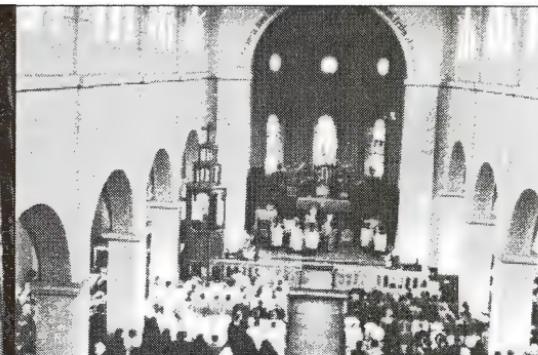
700 catechumens in Nairobi; and outside the capital, 50 schools with 1100 pupils of whom 600 are Christians. It should be remembered that Nairobi also is a transit camp: 1,270 of those baptized in the last decade have departed.

Fr. Witte will make a permanent name for himself in the history of Education in Kenya, when a couple of years later, he will turn his Superior's apparently failed mission in Kabaa into Kabaa School. Already a few months after his arrival, when the festivities of opening the new St. Peter's are over (19 November), he has already one classroom earmarked to train teachers. Soon, with his help, there are three football teams. The choir excels. The building itself which today houses the Nairobi Diocesan Secretariate, Parish offices and part of the Primary School was planned with a triple purpose: Residence for the Fathers at one end, central section a weekday chapel, and four classrooms which become a church extension on Sundays, 40 metres long.

The teacher-training section has six trainee catechists, some Luo, some Kikuyu. Five others, as they work, are being permanently in-serviced. Already the future Headmaster has imposed a strict, disciplined timetable from 5.45 a.m. till lights out at 9 p.m. All are resident, including the "excellent head-catechist John Chege and family. His zeal, devotion and probity have been tested only too clearly." Six resident brides-in-waiting, preparing for Baptism and Marriage, attend catechism from 9.30 a.m. till 11 a.m. with other women; 2 to 3.30 p.m. workers who cannot attend in the evening, when the last session runs from 7 to 8.30 p.m.

Already by mid-1923, it had become obvious that a much larger separate church-building was needed. At Confirmations, the elders made a formal request. The planning and direction of this new venture will be the work of Fr. Con McNamara who will take Fr. Witte's place in 1924. Fr. Witte will very soon be asked to set up a Teacher Training Centre at Kabaa. In October 1925, the marriage-preparation course is expanded and transferred to the nascent St. Teresa's Eastleigh, under the care of the Precious Blood Sisters. A house and plot have been donated for the purpose by an Indian, Mr. Dalgauns.

During these years, leaving his assistants to visit the Ukamba and Kajiado lines, Fr. Blais fosters what will become the parishes



St. Peter Claver's Church

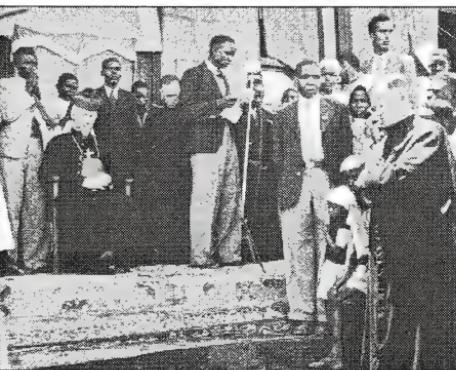
Consecration of Bishop J. McCarthy, Oct. 1946



Crowd gathers in Mission-compound



New Bishop escorted to Mission



Address by Chairman Parish Committee



People greet Bishop McCarthy

of Kilima Mbogo, Kalimoni and Thika while actively encouraging his younger confrère, barely thirty years old, at Kabaa. In spite of the continuous and generous cooperation of shamba-owners, managers, Sisters, confrères, and the enthusiasm of catechists, Christians and catechumens, Jules Blais cannot keep up the pace. He develops asthma and suggests to the Bishop to divide the parish, stretching from Donyo Sabuk to Kibwezi and Magadi Lake. Fr. Mac Namara remains at St. Peter Claver's and takes the main railway-line. The boundary is the Kiu River near Kahawa.

Fr. McNamara now occupies the centre of the stage. His large clear handwriting is addressed directly to us – posterity, his pupils. He underlines in red in case we might miss an important point. In fact, he is a gifted educationalist, and since his appointment as assistant in St. Peter's, he has also become Education Secretary for the whole Vicariate. He sits on official Education committees representing the Bishop; he joins with other Vicariates or with Protestant educational bodies to present a common policy to the Colony authority. He becomes very friendly with the Mill Hill Bishop Brandsma, a kindred spirit. He can even rope him in to talk to his Luo and Baganda. Fr. Doyle, the Mill Hill Superior, will talk to the Bagussi. With his Luos, he celebrates a Solemn Requiem for the Mill Hill pioneer to Kavirondo, Fr. Bouma.

At 39 years of age, he takes over St. Peter Claver's with supreme confidence. He knows what has to be done. Things have been let slip in the past. But now! True order is to be established. Discipline! Even Kabaa's highly-disciplined past trainees complained to Fr. Witte. With the *Wazee* he draws up a list of punishable offences. Criticisms abound: of the Bishop, of the Government, of other missions, of members of particular ethnic groups – and dear Reader, please remember there were thirty-five of them, each with its own language and traditional customs. And you women who come to church in flashy clothes, look out! A customary will be made out for the big feasts and carried out to the letter. Each Christian must have his card to prove it. Admission to Midnight Mass will be by ticket.

Enter left. The new curate, Fr. Michael Finnegan. He gets a little mention from time to time. Doing quite a good job down

the line. His statistics will of course have been checked. (The previous diarist always gave equal space to his assistants.) Patrick McGill now enters the shadow of the great man. He will establish his own kind of greatness later and elsewhere. Remember, this is the best Mission in the Vicariate, with the fastest development, the most schools, and the greatest fervour.

But Con McNamara gets things done. In 1931, the new church on a newly-acquired plot opposite, will be built, opened, and blessed by Archbishop Hinsley, the new Apostolic Delegate, "perhaps the most memorable day in the history of the Mission." He just as easily walks down to Central Station and pulls a parishioner out of the cells while the police keep their distance. He gets the rent on the mission plot cut to a fraction. However, when rumours are spreading that the whole Vicariate is to be handed over to the Consolata Fathers, he does not dare put his feelings to paper. Charity above all!

23 December '27: The Christian women come for Confession. The Eve is reserved for men. These two days also given to the erection of the Crib. It looks very well.

24 December '27: On Christmas Eve we complete what must be a record for St. Peter Claver's, 1100 Confessions. Deo Gratias!

25 December '27: CHRISTMAS DAY: The same rule as last year. It was a glorious day for God and St. Peter Claver, and the Divine Child must have smiled and felt happy, humanum loquor! at the number who received Him and made their hearts His Home. On the material side, we were happy too and good kind friends, European, Goan and African, brought their Christmas boxes.

26 December '27: St. Stephen's Day. A sort of Garden Fête which brought 50/- for our new church was organized in Sisters' grounds at Eastleigh. The Right Rev. Dr. Gogarty (now at Kilimanjaro), Fr. Bernhard and Br. Solanus honoured the Convent and fête with a visit. In the afternoon, Fr. Mc Namara leaves for Kabaa, to be with Fr. Witte on the patronal feast of the school.

27 December '27: Feast of St. John the Apostle. At Kabaa there is High Mass at 11 a.m., a great ceremony, pregnant with meaning, and D.V. with hopes – great hopes – the reception of six aspirant Brothers." (Next year he will chronicle the departure of five Kikuyu girls for the Sisters' postulancy in Bura).

Fr. McNamara is often considered the founder of St. Peter Claver's. In a sense, it is true, as he seems to have imprinted on it the spirit which has filled it for many years: a certain traditionalism, combined with deep devotion – the very walls of the church invite to prayer at this noisiest corner of Nairobi City, a strong and dedicated lay leadership, a good harmony between pastor and people, home visitation, the rich religious life of its many confraternities: the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, different ethnic associations like Martyrs of Uganda for Baganda, Epiphany for Kikuyu; each Luo section at one time had its own; the Precious Blood Sisters started Womens and Girls' groups, St. Vincent de Paul and later the Legion of Mary. It is here that Edel Quinn will get the best reception.

Fr. McNamara continued to support the Sisters in the expansion of their work. The future site of the Girls Secondary School is bought from the Consolata Fathers, and besides, a one-acre plot for a Maternity secured in Pumwani. All this with the active support of Bishop Heffernan, who succeeded Bishop Neville in 1932 and has now come to live in Nairobi. However, the recurrence of his former TB brings orders from the Doctor to rest, at Mombasa, at Bura, at Kilimanjaro. KEEP QUIET is the prescription. However, periods of rest and the help of assistants like Frs. Tom Maher, Colman McMahon, Ned Lawless, Paul White are not enough. He must pause. He departs in April 1934 with a page of advice to his successors. The journal of the Community now falls silent for ten years. Who could compete with such brio?

Jules Blais, in 1926, had taken the "smaller" half of the divided parish. He gives us in his Kilima Mbogo and Kalimoni journals a very personal account of his further apostolate, which was to end more suddenly than one might have expected.

"Mission de l'Immaculée Conception Kilima Mbogo.

On the 27th of March 1926, Palm Sunday, a crowd which could be about a thousand, assembled at nine in the morning near the new church constructed these last three months on the banks of the Athi River (downstream from Maboko) by the untiring Br. Josaphat Novitzki.

In the first rows of the crowd, near the main door, sat Mr. and Mrs. McVeigh, the initiators of the new Mission, and the students of Kabaa Teacher-training School."

Fr. Blais, delegated by Bishop Neville, proceeded to the solemn blessing of the new church dedicated to the Immaculate Conception. Fr. Witte then gave the oration, making a nice comparison between the Christians and the church. "Formerly the stones which have served to construct this church were rough and soiled, till came along the workers who extracted them, cut them, and then set one on top of another, and so we have today a dwelling to come to and pray to God in and have Him dwell in our midst. Similarly, the Christians here present were formerly living in paganism, with a soul soiled by sin; then came the missionaries who have sculpted their souls, have cleansed them from sin, and inserted them in the Church. As the stones hold themselves up to become a house for God, so Christians remain firm in their faith, free from sin, to be also dwellings for God by grace." After the instruction Fr. Witte sang the Mass, animated by the magnificent chant of his aspirant teachers.

It was the dawn of the new project, and if it pleases God, of the new mission of Kilima Mbogo. It is intended that the new mission would be the centre for all the schools, seventeen in number, from Ruiru to Donyo Sabuk. In April 1926, there were 405 christians and 620 catechumens. May Mary Immaculate, patroness of the new church, take under her very special protection the project dedicated to her."

(There follows a map of the 100 acre plot, L.O. 4923, bought from Mrs. Wetter of Mukawa Farm. It borders on the Athi River.)

26 October '26: The council of the Vicariate having judged it useful to establish the mission of Kilima Mbogo joined to that of Kalimoni where the devoted Br. Josaphat is just finishing the construction of the church, and having appointed Fr. Blais, this Father leaves Nairobi at 8.15 with two big motor-lorries which are filled with the different things necessary for the foundation. He is accompanied by the teacher, Joseph Chege and a cook and house-boy. At 11.15 all the loads are put down at the mission, and Fr. Blais takes possession of his new ministry. In the afternoon, he receives from the White Sisters in Mangu a supply of altar-breads and a generous gift.

31 October '26: First Feast of Christ the King. For the first Sunday of the new mission, the church is packed. 8 a.m. Asperges,

then Instruction and Sung Mass. 197 Communions. After Mass, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

1 November '26: All Saints. At 5.45 a.m., Instruction followed by Holy Mass. In spite of the rain and the great distances, we have a good congregation and more than 100 Communions.

3 November '26: Rainy morning during which we plant an avenue of Silver Oaks (Grevillea Robusta).

5 November '26: Some of the trees planted have been cut by wild animals and others trampled by hippos. (However, the giraffe that strolled through the compound at midday one day did no damage).

9 November '26: Heavy rain. All day planting Silver Oaks in the different avenues.

22 November '26: First burial at the Mission: a child of four.

28 November '26: Baptism of 24 adults, all from Donyo Sabuk Estate. The first Solemn Baptism of the new Mission. We are confident that it will be followed by many others. Now that the Father is living here, he can have smaller groups more often, getting to know the Christians better, and preparing them better.

1 December '26: The Father is staying at Kalimoni for a fortnight, having been brought there by Mr. and Mrs. Lindsay. Baptisms and Confirmations.

13 December '26: The Lindsays collect the Father, bring him to lunch, and put him down near Major Delap's, from where he proceeds by mule to Kabaa, where he is to supervise the exams.

24 December '26: Hippos have caused great damage in our Christians' farms. People are arriving in throngs, some by automobile, for tomorrow's feast. Many Confessions.

25 December '26: Christmas – a very beautiful and consoling feast. Church packed. More than 400 Communions. At 8 a.m., Instruction, Sung Mass, followed by two other Masses during which the people sing carols. All over at 10.30. Immediately, three lorry-loads of Christians take off for Kalimoni and another, for Saba-Saba. A marvelous day. No disturbance. No tembo. Deo Gratias.

31 December '26: And the first year of the new Mission ends with great hopes for the future.

1 January '27: Mass at 5.45 a.m., before work. Two tons of timbers arrive: school and church benches.

16 January '27: Sunday Mass at Thika.

19 January '27: On to Kamiti, where Mr. Dormer's car is waiting to bring him to Ndundu Estate. Stays at Lioki Mission for a few days, visiting the estate-schools in the area.

22 January '27: Arrives at Kalimoni (on foot from Lioki). Brother Josaphat and his workers are finishing off the Sacristy presses.

23 January '27: Sunday Mass at 8. Afternoon preparing neophytes for First Communion.

26 January '27: Leaves Kalimoni at 6 a.m. for Kilima Mbogo. Arrives at midday, having passed by Ndarugu Estate. (Six-hour walk).

31 January '27: Our neighbours' sisal is ablaze since 3 a.m. Still burning at 10 p.m. What a loss.

(Fr. Blais is spending a week or so each month at Kalimoni.)

23 April '27: Back at Kilima Mbogo at 3.30. He was driven over by one of Mr. Poppleton's cars (Ndarugu Manager). He is happy to be back here, where he feels much more at home. Heavy night rain. 1"40.

30 April '27: The Bishop has written from Holland to say that we'll be able to have three Sisters for Kalimoni.

1 May '27: Sunday, Sung Mass for our benefactors, especially the Society of St. Peter Claver (Sisters), who have helped us so generously in the past and even now. (Bell, statues, monstrance, etc.)

18 May '27: A leopard caught in our trap.

22 May '27: Invitation to have a monthly Mass at Sukari Ltd. Fine.

28 May '27: Visit of Fr. Cagnolo of Icagaki Consolata Mission, Supervisor of Estate Schools in Nyeri Vicariate. He will say Sunday Mass tomorrow in a neighbouring station, Gattito. He leaves after lunch.

3 July '27: After a crowded Sunday Mass, collected by Mr. Freeman, Manager of Juja Farm. Baptise his son at midday. Returned by car after lunch. There could be a flourishing school there.

31 July '27: Baptism of 50 Adults.

17 August '27: Visit of 10 White Sisters from Mangu by lorry. Church and school visited, then picnic lunch at the Fourteen Falls. The Father, going on safari, takes the chance of a lift as they leave at 4.30.

6 September '27: After a stay in Kalimoni, a visit to Sukari and to Mukuyu School on the Consolata Fathers' Estate and quite a good annual retreat at St. Austin's; the generous Mr. Poppleton sends him back in one of his cars. During his absence, Joseph Chege, our great teacher and factotum, has been quite seriously ill. He also needs a change.

17 September '27: Many visitors today: Fr. Bernhard who will give Confirmation to-morrow, Mr. Galway an old friend, Brs. Solanus and Josaphat. The latter had decided to rid us of the hippos, but now cannot find any. We find room for everyone to sleep.

18 September '27: 150 Confirmations.

20 September '27: He gets a lift on a lorry to Thika, as he must get treatment for his enormously swollen hand. Spends 10 days at Mangu being cared for by Mother Majella. From there to Sukari, Kamiti, Lioki and Kalimoni.

26 October '27: Return by motor-lorry, only it catches fire near Thika. All of us a bit hurt. But no matter, very busy preparing the Statue of Our Lady and the church-bell which have just come. Also a baptism font. A statue of St. Thérèse is for Kalimoni.

30 October '27: The Bishop has arrived to bless the bell. He has checked the books and signed the journal. The bell is solemnly christened Maria Theresia, assisted by Fr. Bosca, the Italian Father from Gatito. It is inscribed in Latin: Laudo Deum verum, plebem voco, defunctos ploro, festa decoro – Kilima Mbogo. I praise the true God, call the people, mourn the dead, enhance feasts.

31 October '27: Torrential rain early morning. Planting flowers and potatoes.

8 December '27: Immaculate Conception. War on bats.

10 December '27: Arrival Fr. Puel, White Fathers' procurator at Mombasa, brought by three Consolata Fathers, Luigi Perlo, Borello and Cagnolo. We visit the Athi Falls, the bridge, the camp. They take off at 3.30 for Nairobi.

25 December '27: Church full at 6.30 for Mass at 8. After three Masses and Benediction, he finds some have not waited till the end.

1 January '28: We open the New Year with Sunday Mass at Thika at 9 a.m., preceded by Confessions and Instruction. Quite a good crowd, with some Goans present. 81 confessed.

At 11, depart by motor-lorry for Kamiti, where the Italian Fathers are waiting to bring him to their plantation. After lunch, examining catechumens till 5.30. He is brought to Lioki to spend the night. (Manira School is magnificent, and Fr. Maletto, charming – Kalimoni diary.)

2 January '28: At 8 a.m. collected again by Italian Fathers and brought to Nairobi. After a good cup of coffee at their place and a long conversation, to St. Peter Claver's for lunch."

Jules Blais had two reasons to come to Nairobi. One was to acquire a motor-car. The other was to see the Doctor. He has not been well.

Still, he takes up the reins again. In a day or two, he is back on the same busy schedule, continually adding new stations. Lionnet, the Sukari manager, a devout Catholic, brings him to Mambre Estate where there already is a school. He now has a car, but is barely able to drive. He gets back to Kilima Mbogo, delighted to be back at base. What is troubling him is if Sisters come, he will be forced to stay in Kalimoni. Brother is building the convent and runs out of money! What a pleasant disappointment! Still, in all loyalty, he begins to pack. A prolonged stay in hospital intervenes. At the end of August, he can pay his beloved Kilima Mbogo a visit: "With real pleasure I come back. *Here, there is more life, more children, more space, what have you? Everywhere more interest and more consolation. And how everything has been kept in such proper shape: chapel, school, house, avenues. We begin the day with Holy Mass.*"

Father Witte arrives. The Precious Blood Sisters are coming. He wants to hijack them and bring them to Kabaa instead! Poor Jules. He has to refuse. So the bold Michael Witte has to head off. And Sisters arrive. Bedding is gotten, the chapel visited. And guess who cooks supper? They spend the night in the school, transformed for the moment into a convent.

For two years he commutes. The intervals get longer and longer. He is ill, once with a temperature of 105°+, and watched all night by Sr. Arnolda and Joseph Chege. The roads are impassable: two whole months of rain-gauge reports only. When he comes, the flowers seem brighter, the papaya more plentiful, the children happier, Communions more numerous, a thousand times more preferable! His last Christmas:

25 December '29: Nativity of Our Lord: At Midnight, Solemn Mass with incense; Kabaa students are serving. Perfect order, still only 246 Communions. Mass is over at 1.30 a.m. In 15 minutes, not a soul around. Rising at 5 a.m. for early Mass at Thika. Thence Kalimoni.

31 December '29: (Kalimoni journal) And the year 1929 goes off to join the years that have gone before. The years pass on. Eternity approaches with long strides. May our glorious patron, Thérèse, help us to love God as she does."

(In the New Year, 1930, Fr. Blais having fallen ill has not been able to visit Kilima Mbogo. Three months of rain-gauge reports)

7 April 1930: Father Blais driven by the new director, the amiable Fr. G. Brouwer, comes to bid his last farewell to his beloved Kilima Mbogo. It is breaking his heart. Having visited house, school, chapel, they sit at table. Rain pours down in torrents. Some come to make some really generous gifts to say Kwa Heri."

Another hand adds at the bottom of the page:

Fr. Blais died in France, 18 December 1930. Aged 47."

"I am always moving from the day of birth until the day of death" (St Columban).



Famed 14-Falls: Kilima Mbogo

Chapter Five

THE KIAMBU MISSION: MISSIONARIES TO THE KIKUYU

Kamiri and three or four of his mates slid up through the long grass to get a better look at the strangers. They were two of the red-faced strangers one now saw from time to time. One like them was living at Kambui not far away. Another, it was said, owned the very land where the two were getting their evening meal. They were wearing long black *kanzus* and had ropes round their waists, and as they waited for the food to cook, they had books open and were talking aloud. He had heard you could get secret messages from the black signs in the book. People said these strangers were dangerous. These ones had sharp noses like Somalis. Still, they did not look so dangerous.

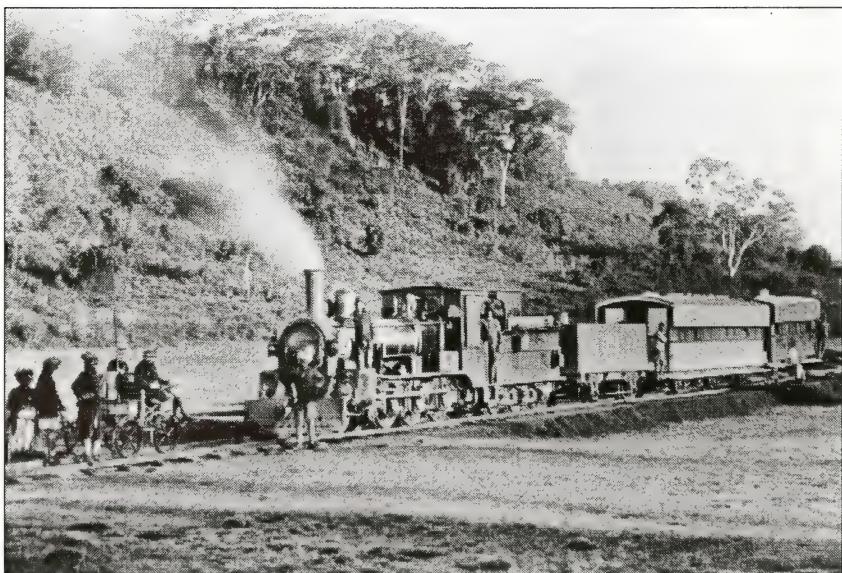
It was the month of March, 1913. The two Spiritans were Eugène Pottier and his companion, Brother Theodomir. The place, Lioki, still bore its Dorobo name, as did other places in the area. His grandfather Kamiri, "the most important of all the Kikuyus," had always told them to be polite to those red strangers, though he himself had once been captured by them. One of his mothers had brought them some milk and bananas. Another boy had shown them the stream nearby. He had imitated their strange accent in Kikuyu.

Within a few months, Kamiri and his friends were testing their own accents on a new language and discovering the mystery of the sounds scratched in a book. But after one year, 1914, the *Mofe* (that was his name) told them he would have to go to the war. They could not understand such a gentle person going to fight. He always told them not to fight. One of his friends,

Fr. Soul, came, but he also went off to the fight very soon afterwards. Their new house was left to be minded by a Kikuyu named Kimengi from Kiambu. "That's the one who had a fight with my brother afterwards and was brought to court about it."

But then Mitreci came (1919 – Fr. Pierre Mitrecey CSSp). He was the one we all loved. It was he who baptized us. No one could even think of his being dangerous. Even when he rode high on his horse, looking like a giraffe, no one could be afraid of him. Who could be afraid of a giraffe? We even rode up there with him. Some said all those strangers were the same. We knew he was different.

On the 14th of July 1902, Bishop Allgeyer and Fr. Hémery had trekked the six-hour journey from St. Austin's to the home of Chief Kamiri. The previous month they had done the much longer 3-day trek from Naivasha Station to found the new mission at Tuthu with "our confrères of Consolata." In 1901, the wild English adventurer John Boyes, on his way to answer a summons to court, met two Spiritans walking near the Escarpment and



Limuru Railway-station 1902

offered them the house he was then abandoning in Tuthu as a Catholic mission. It seemed an ideal place to instal the new Italian volunteer missionaries. Karuri, the "Chief" and seer who had previously supported Boyes, was delighted. The Bishop now wanted to establish intermediate stations between St. Austin's and Tuthu. And so they were directed to Kamiri, another well-known "Chief" and seer.

However, as the All Saints Kiambu diary tells us, having found too few villages and too few people near Kamiri's, and as the Bishop had to return to Zanzibar, he confided the task of finding a site to Frs. Bernhard and Cayzac. They were to look for a suitable location within a day's march from St. Austin's. The foundation of All Saints mission beside the Riara River, on the hill called Rongere near Kiambu, was the result. There were about forty villages around. Rurigi, the big man in nearby Turitu was reasonably friendly. His counterpart at Kangoya above the other bank, was called Karanja.

Louis Bernhard pitched his tent. He had three "children of the Mission" with him for company. They start clearing the hill, a mass of vegetation. Consternation! Karanja and all Kangoya want him out. Anywhere else, but not on that hill. The stubborn Spiritan refuses to budge. Though the St. Austin's diarist had severely criticised the Colonial seizure of all "unoccupied" land some months before, his confrère now invokes the "Government's" law. The land is unoccupied. Anyone can have it. Karanja finally acquiesces on Kinyanjui's advice. They have no Mass-kit of their own and must walk to Nairobi for Sunday Mass. On September 9th, feast of St. Peter Claver, they have Mass for the first time in their tent. St. Austin's reports the fact with a prayer: *"May the Lamb without spot who is descending for the first time into this corner of Kikuyu enlighten the minds of its inhabitants and fortify their will so that they may recognise the necessity and beauty of our holy faith."* In October, they make an official request to the Government. In November, an official visits; they may now build, in spite of a large settlers' syndicate having its eye on the plot. The land includes a sacred grove with a Mugumo tree.

Once Fr. Cayzac had seen that his confrères were installed in Kiambu before the middle of August, he hit off across country to

Tuthu to see how the Consolata Fathers were settling down, to finalize the purchase of the land, and to see what other suitable sites in between might be suitable for new mission stations. Returning with Fr. Perlo, the head of the Consolata group, at the beginning of September, he reported that for one day's march from Kiambu, the population was very sparse. But after that, as he traversed Metumi, he noted three or four possible sites. There are plenty of inhabitants, the majority of whom are friendly. With Fr. Perlo, he thought a better route to Tuthu could start from Limuru railway-station.

But within a week or so, the whole of Metumi is in an uproar. A series of tit for tat attacks over the previous year, and finally the killing of an English settler for unspecified reasons, led the D.O., Dr. Hinde, to mount a big so-called "punitive" expedition. Captain Meinertzhangen reports the orders he gave on the 8th of September: "Every living thing except children, should be killed without mercy." In the morning, he writes how grateful he is that no children were found. He knew his Sudanese and Swahili mercenaries could not stop killing once they started. "Rifles and machine-guns," Fr. Cayzac will write sarcastically later, "are the indispensable auxiliaries of civilisation!!!" Villages and harvests are burnt, hundreds of cattle and thousands of sheep and goats rounded up. Fifty old grand-mothers are taken hostage. Two hundred people have been killed. Fr. Hémery asks: "You rulers, sirs, are soldiers and police the only means of civilisation? You know where religion weakens, policemen must be increased. But this is your last concern, you rulers."

Dr. Hinde wants the Tuthu missionaries to withdraw, suggesting Fort Hall as an alternative. The pretext? "the savagery of the local inhabitants." Fr. Hémery thinks some Protestant missionaries did not approve of the new foundation. Now Ainsworth says they must get out and suggests Limuru. Jackson joins the chorus: "Evacuate!" Finally, the Commissioner himself, Sir Charles Eliot, steps in: "Let them feel free to stay." "Which of them is deceiving most the blessed monks they are persecuting?" our diarist, Fr. Hémery asks. The Bishop wires: "Let them decide for themselves."

When the Bishop arrives from Zanzibar, he is informed by Fr. Perlo, that the result of the uproar is a new mission at Limuru

and a new mission at Fort Hall. There are already two Fathers in Fort Hall (more correctly, Murang'a), and by December, the site near Limuru Station will be chosen definitively. St. Austin's receives a gift of "*a magnificent ciborium and a surgeon's set of instruments from our generous confrères of Consolata.*"

In February 1903, Fr. Ball, recently appointed to St. Austin's, pays a visit to the "confrères of Limuru," probably taking the train. In early March, Fr. Bernhard with Br. Solanus, who has built a small house for him at Kiambu, "*spend five hours walking to visit the Italian Fathers at Limuru and then return to Nairobi by train.*" The visit is reciprocated when Fr. Gays comes to stay for a few days "*to dispel the solitude of the monk of All Saints.*" As he yet has no Christians, he goes to spend Easter at St. Austin's. While he is away, eleven girls are "circumcised." The new mission was the old site for the ceremony. In April, Fr. Perlo at Limuru sends word to St. Austin's that he has a bad fever, and they at once despatch some medicine. Later, Fr. Gays calls to thank them, on his way to Fort Hall. In June, Bishop Allgeyer goes to Limuru and celebrates "*Notre Dame de la Consolata joyeusement.*"

For the past year, foreign settlers have been pouring into the country. They demand land. On 29 October, the St. Austin's diarist reports: "*The Kikuyus are being called to a meeting to be told that all the land below Fort Hall, the whole of Kabete-Kiambu, will be reserved for settlers. We shall then have to sell St. Austin's as all the surrounding villages will be dispersed.*" The same would hold for All Saints. The Bishop arrives and tells Fr. Cayzac to go as soon as possible into the interior and find suitable sites.

As it turns out, the division of land was not that drastic. Certain areas, instead, are "reserved" for the indigenous Kikuyu, and in fact, a settler neighbour of Fr. Bernhard's is forced to move elsewhere. Fr. Bernhard will still have some Kikuyu villages around him, but much of the land is settlers' concessions. On the other hand, St. Austin's will bring hundreds of people onto their land as nominal workers to avoid dispersion. All the same, Fr. Cayzac sets out in January 1904 to prospect, taking with him Fr. Bernhard and Mr. Felix, a French Catholic settler.

When they call on him, Dr. Hinde the D.O receives them well. But they find to their amazement that the Consolata Fathers have

now six stations, and that “*these good and zealous missionaries have effectively occupied the whole country without trumpeting or drumming it abroad.*” They identify two sites according to the order of the Bishop. But in their report “*they reproach the Bishop, saying that if he does not act promptly and energetically Kikuyu will be lost to the Spiritans.*” They are evidently unaware that the Bishop himself had given a free hand to Fr. Perlo to open as many stations as he judged proper.

The newly-founded Consolata order had conceived the ambition to evangelize the Galla people living on the borders of what are now Ethiopia and Kenya. Because of the impossibility at the time of passing through Ethiopia or Somalia, they came to the Vicariate of Zanzibar, which on paper reached that area but had never been explored from outside. They were first to learn the missionary task alongside the Holy Ghost Fathers. It seems then that they fell in love with “Kinya” and its richly-endowed people, the Kikuyu. The Lady Galla is forgotten. Mumbi the Kikuyu takes her place with her seven daughters, and the marriage is clinched by Baba Mtakatifu. A report arrives in St. Austin’s: “*All Kikuyu north of the Railway is to be confided to Fr. Perlo and the Institute of Maria Consolata. October 1905. It seemed that the Spiritans would no longer be needed as “missionnaires au Kikouyou.”*” They must give up “*the pearl of Africa*” (sic). “*It is too bad.*”

During the period under consideration, the Spiritans had already, as directed by the Vatican, ceded the pastoral care of scores of peoples to other missionary societies: White Fathers and Mill Hill, Trinitarians in Somalia, Benedictines and Capuchins in Tanganyika, S.M.A. and others in West Africa. They must continue to do so till the final handing back to the diocesan clergy. That is the very nature of the apostolic “*commissio.*”

That it should be the nature of missionary work is obvious but nonetheless, often extremely painful to those individual humans who are missionaries. Many of these divisions entailed some misunderstandings: read the urgent report to Bishop Hanlon in Kampala, when Fr. Cayzac visited Naivasha and Nakuru before that western boundary was properly defined. The case of Kikuyu is unique in that the misunderstanding continued for decades! After 20 years, the Spiritan Procurator at the Vatican writes from Rome to

both Superior General and Vicar Apostolic and says in so many words: "Your Excellencies! For heaven's sake, stop your squabbling. None of your arguments hold any water here." But how to explain the extraordinary disappointment of the Spiritans from Superior General to Bishop to the least concerned member of the district?

The Consolata idea of evangelizing the Galla came from their Capuchin compatriots who had the care of the northern Galla in Ethiopia. On the other hand, how the Spiritans conceived of a mission to the Kikuyu is much more difficult to explain.

The ancestors of the Kikuyu and their Meru and Kamba cousins had fled from fair-skin marauders and slavers, that is, either Arabs or Persians, many many centuries ago, and settled in the forested highlands of the interior. The "white-skin serpent of the sea" in the story was the personification of that permanent threat. It is not at all impossible, as tradition relates, that the Kikuyu as a distinct entity originated from one family which moved into the thick forests on the slopes of Kirinyaga (pronounced Kinya-a). They became still more reclusive by intermarrying with the native forest-dwellers, Dorobo, Athi, and even pygmy, remaining hidden and virtually unknown in their forest fastness. How Bishop de Courmont came to conceive the ideal of a mission to such a little-known people is a mystery, yet already in 1888, he writes that Malindi and Kilimanjaro are their two strategic points on their way to the Kikuyu. It is true, the "interior" in those days exercised a special fascination. Besides, they are presumed free from slave-trading and Islam.

The free-lance evangelist, Stuart-Watt, had conceived that very ideal at the same time. He had literally sold all that he had and mounted a small caravan and with wife and children set out from Mombasa in 1894, despite the fact that the famous explorer Thomson had said, "No caravan has yet been able to penetrate this country, i.e., Kikuyu" (As said earlier, a Spiritan caravan failed the same year). Stuart-Watt had as his purpose "to reach the dense population which, according to native reports, was concentrated near to the snow-clad mountain Kenya." On arrival, he finds the British Company post virtually under siege and takes the advice offered and, abandoning the Kikuyu, settles near Machakos with the Kamba people.

When the Spiritans arrive in Kikuyu five years later, as described in earlier chapters, the situation is calmer. They are happy with their first contacts. They immediately get down to learning the language, the indispensable means to deepen that contact. While they accept willingly the ministry to other races, they are proud to call themselves and be called even by the Superior General, *missionnaires au Kikouyou*. One can only imagine their mental disarray when the whole people is to be handed over to others.

In December 1905, when Fr. Perlo arrives with the Roman decision, they send their friend, M. Felix, to the Railway Station. It seems none of them had the courage to go and meet him. As it turns out, they need not pack up as yet. The new boundary will be the Thika River. In the New Year 1906, Bishop Allgeyer travels to Rome and obtains a modification making the river Maragua the boundary. This leaves intact the three Spiritan foundations in Metumi "and space to establish more in this beautiful country. Don't we have enough unhealthy spots to be left at least a part of Kikuyu?" It was not to be. The remission is cancelled in July. They must move from the civil province of Kenya. "*Roma locuta est*," the All Saints diarist concludes.

The immediate result is the foundation of Mangu Mission, August 1906. Founded in tears by Fr. Cayzac and the other two displaced confrères one day's march away on the Kalumeno River. It is soon dubbed *Mangou des merveilles*, Mangu of the wonders. Within two months, they have five usable buildings ready, but Fr. Leconte is transferred to the Procure in Zanzibar; Fr. Müller returns to "the mountains of his beloved Taita." Fr. Soul is appointed to the *paradis de Mangou*. Soon they will open their eyes to see "the great and populous province of Ukamba." The White Sisters of Our Lady of Africa will take a large concession not far away. As the song says: "There are more fish in the sea."

Fifteen months after his arrival at Mangu, Joseph Cayzac reports to the MotherHouse in buoyant mood, having cast aside "the pale rays of the moon falling on three sad missionaries. They have a three-room house to live in, a separate dining-room with store and hen-house, a chapel 15 metres long, and a fifth building comprising school, kitchen and bath-room. Fr. Soul has

arrived straight from University. He will be surprised to realise that he will need all his science to teach our wild and proud Kikuyu. The site of Mangu is indeed excellent, all that St. Thomas might require for a model foundation. The air is pure and healthy, the horizons are vast and of a beautiful variety; at the foot of our hill winds the limpid waters of a fine stream, the Kalumeno, and besides, there are many other attractive points prescribed by the holy Doctor. We welcome the prayers of the six Sisters who have come to live a few miles from us. They must hasten the day when our very dearly loved but still too unruly Kikuyu will allow themselves to be won over by the grace, which is beginning quite visibly even now to touch them.

Now would be the moment to describe our successes in the apostolate to the tribe which has attracted us so much. You must realise that in fifteen months, we have only been able to prepare the beds for the divine seed. Still, the Bishop, who came to encourage us, has been able to confirm twelve of our Christians. (They have had 37 Baptisms in 1908). The soil is favourable and



Group celebrating 50-year Jubilee of Mangu Church 1963

promises in a not too distant future, a beautiful and consoling harvest."

In 1910, Fr. Cayzac is in France collecting funds to build a proper stone church. Fr. Leconte, filling in for him, continues the same optimistic note in his report. A stone house, residence for the Community, has been built in the intervening years and blessed by Fr. Zielenbach, MotherHouse official visitor. In 1909, they had 19 Baptisms and 20 Confirmations. He describes the edifying death of one of their first Christians:

"atrocious sufferings patiently borne." "More remarkable was the manner in which he was nursed to the end in direct contradiction of custom, watched and waked and prayed over in death, and instead of becoming food for hyenas, buried in our cemetery with all religious ceremonies. Clearly something has changed.

"We have also had a visit from cartographers. We are situated at $0^{\circ} 59'10''$ south of the Equator, 1,800 metres above sea-level. On the superb horizon, we have both Kilimanjaro and Kenya, both with perennial snow, Donyo Sabuk down among the beasts of the plain, and Kinangop, home of elephants. Such is Mangu, surnamed "of the Wonders." A good climate and not too many Protestants(!). Its people are well-disposed. They want us to stay here with them. The harvest is ripe. Bring the workers."

By the next report in 1913, Fr. Leconte has taken off for Kabaa in Ukamba, having first with great zeal seconded Br. Josaphat in the completion of the new stone church. Fr. Cayzac having returned "to his dear Mangu," "with his pleasant manner, his intimate knowledge of the language, and his magic snuff-box," asks what is now needed to complete a sound material base for the mission after church and residence. The Procure replies: "6,000 coffee-trees."

Joseph Cayzac begs to differ: "To evangelize efficaciously, a missionary must be free of all material care. Where will he find time to share the food of the spirit with the flock, if from morning to evening, his life is a bitter struggle for his daily bread? Experience tells us that a missionary absorbed by material care does not conserve the indispensable interior disposition of soul,

equanimity, affability, patience. He is transformed into a really surly sort, malevolent, irascible, hard and grasping to the point of scandal. Is every missionary to be turned into a settler, more or less in disguise?"

He must all the same bow to authority and plant some coffee on their limited plot. However, he is prouder of four young married catechists.

Their apostolic strategy was first based on building up Christian families bound together with the Sacrament of Marriage. After ten years, they will have 50 such families. These families were then invited to settle at a circle of schools built within a 10-mile radius of the Mission. To avoid the intrigues of the colonial officials, a land-buying scheme is set up with lay leaders as trustees. The families would be masters and models of the Christian life.

Though specially respectful of Kikuyu tradition, he still works strongly against several customs. Given the Kikuyu fear of death and the dead, he counts 42 burials over a decade as "the most glorious of his statistics." Another statistic he could be proud of was the number of people who took the pledge of temperance or total abstinence from alcohol. For a long time, no headway was made against the custom of drunkenness. Even one of his most gifted converts, Michael, had twice built up a fine business, only to lose all twice over through heavy drinking. He finally came and asked Fr. Cayzac for a three-year pledge. At once, his business picked up, shops were busy, transport oxen multiplying, his mills producing flour, his bank balance mounting. (Some years later, he will drive Fr. Lammer from Mangu to Kiambu in his own car.) Not only Christians began to take note of such success. The young men themselves were calling meetings. Excesses were denounced. Each then was invited to come and kiss the cross and promise abstinence from alcohol for one or two or five years or, as one chose, though not married, "till my first daughter becomes marriageable." He concludes his report: "We have nothing heroic to report; still our young Mission has kept the promises it led us to conceive in 1906."

One must admire this really Christian missionary full of patience and hope. Later, a new foundation, Gatanga, had to be ceded to their "neighbours and colleagues of Consolata" when a

rearrangement of the civil provincial boundary, the Chania instead of the Thika River, put it under the Prefecture of Kenya. "One ought to be comforted completely at the fine results of our successors. But one lacks so much a truly supernatural approach. We must try to be ready for everything like proper servicemen of the Lord."

Nothing like the Mangu optimism is heard at All Saints Kiambu. At first, the general attitude of the population was favourable, though distrustful. Many come to listen to instruction or attend Mass for a while. Very few consent to come regularly. A big feast could draw a crowd. Then stop. The first solemn Baptism of four young men on All Saints Day 1905 filled the church with fervent hope, it seemed to Louis Bernhard. This may be the beginning. By the end of the year, he realises how much the Kikuyu is an individualist. He does not follow the crowd. He does not commit himself easily. The only consolation is that individual conviction is more guaranteed. Promises when made will mean something.

While the ordinary folk feel free to move in and out of the mission, pass the time of the day, or have a cut dressed, the Government-approved leaders in the surrounding villages carry on a campaign of intermittent opposition. Sometimes blocking mission-dwellers from pasture or firewood, sometimes accusing them or the Reverend Father mischievously to the English officials, who, in their turn, are continually blamed in the journal for their secret antagonism, disguised by a studied politeness. Requests for new sites in Tinganga and Lioki in 1908 are turned down after supposedly careful consideration. If Christians in Kenya today are in the majority Protestant, it should be remembered that that was the established choice and policy of the Colonial Power.

Fr. Bernhard seemed to have had sufficient good humour and perseverance to keep going in these circumstances. His three successors, though making important careers for themselves later and elsewhere, leave us very depressed with their continued complaints and desperate prayers. Yet a fair-sized chapel is built, a stone dwelling house, a small school; coffee planted at the start is continually expanded and yields sometimes with extraordinary abundance. The mission becomes financially self-support-

ing. On the other hand, 14 years elapse before the neighbouring headmen, Malaro, Njuguna and Rurigi, allow them to catechise in their villages. Then, there were the mysterious deaths of the first five or six infants born at the mission to the few Christian families. Fr. Fouasse visits Uganda and returns "comforted to have seen a really flourishing mission!"

Fr. Jacques Horber, whose years of missionary service in Kenya allowed him to see the entire development of the Church from a small struggling mission to a dozen dioceses, mostly staffed by African bishops and clergy, in later years, was never very eager to expand on his time in Kiambu. His stay in All Saints seems to have been a rather long-drawn-out, solitary and frustrating experience. Obviously a "strong" man. But the Kikuyu had been bullied and bashed too much already.

Fr. Hans Burgman, historian of the Mill Hill Fathers' missionary apostolate in Kenya, says of his confrères: "They did not seem to have realised why the K. were uncooperative. The K. were deeply hurt. Twice over, the white strangers had stepped into their affairs with savage power. The K. had tried to defend their national pride by sending the flower of their young warriors against the arrogant intruders, and hundreds of them had been massacred in fights that gave them no chance at all. Their defeat was complete, their desperate resistance had been futile and ridiculous. The presence of the white man was a constant reminder of their humiliation. The British upset the whole political organisation of the K. and appointed their own favourites as chiefs. All the K. could do was seethe with hatred. It is a miracle that the priests got any respect at all." Fr. Burgman is talking of the Kisii. The Kikuyu suffered a similar humiliation. They were more prudent and bowed more swiftly to *force majeure*. Should one not expect similar resentment and animosity? And did not later events not prove it?

Did the young Swiss, Jacques Horber from St. Gallen, not remember the tribal clashes in his own homeland within living memory or the centuries-long resistance to invasion from imperial powers? Still more ironically, the native Alsace of many of the confrères was being liberated during the very period. The Irish Burkes, OConnors, Foleys, Gogartys were brought up in the af-

termath of a Land War where the native Irish had won from the Imperial power and its settlers a revolutionary land reform. But did they make the comparison? It is true that the student, Maurice Otunga, heard his Irish priest-teacher drawing exactly that comparison. But was not that exceptional? On the cultural level, as Henry Koren says, Fr. Daniel OLeary applied the love and respect he had for his own native oral traditions to the oral traditions and culture of the Kikuyu, his adopted people, and indeed, his school-books and Gitabu prayer-book are inspired by that love. Still, it seems to remain true that few missionaries could see what was at stake socially and politically in the history that was unfolding itself in East Africa under their very eyes.

The evangelist Stuart-Watt's family, even at moments of great danger, refused the security of the Machakos boma or the protection of its askaris. They did not want to compromise their image before their people. Neither did they fraternise with officials. The young wife of Francis Hall, the Colonial Officer, though so short of company, never seems to have called on her compatriot a few miles up the road or vice versa. Yet the Holy Ghost Fathers from the very beginning were socializing with Railway people, officials, and when the settler invasion developed, with these very invaders. Fr. Bernhard insists on what pains he took from the start to impress on people that he was neither settler nor official. But he did enjoy his motor-cycle ride over and intellectual discussions with the Baroness Karen Blixen. She accepted easily that he valued the conversion of nine young Kikuyus more than many motor-cycles. But what of the Kikuyus themselves? Fr. Cayzac could write in the 1920's: "The people had not as yet made any distinction between whiteness and whiteness, between officials, missionaries and settlers." From Kalimoni, Fr. OFlynn reflects in September 1947: *"It is sad to think that Africans, fairly numerous, merely regard the Priest as 'Mzungu tu' – just a European."* In spite of continued reminders and reproaches from their Superiors, the Spiritans seemed to do quite little to dispel the confusion. Edel Quinn, however, the Legion Envoy, did notice the great reluctance of some Holy Ghost Fathers to have anything to do with non-Africans, though her

usual perspicacity fails her, and she is quite puzzled by it. (Desmond Forristal).

The devout Catholic Frenchman and settler, Mr. Felix, had built a chapel on his land on the Ruaraka River and asked for monthly Mass from the priest and catechism for his workers. A most generous benefactor, it was he who had bought for the Spiritans as a gift the original ten-acre plot at Lioki, the only condition being its dedication to Our Lady of Victories. He was always a regular attender at Sunday and Feast-day Mass either at St. Austin or All Saints. He even accompanied the Fathers sometimes on a long-distance trek. But how could an ordinary person see the difference between planter and priest? Were not all acquiescing in this gigantic conspiracy whereby, in Fr. Cayzac's words, "the labourer is the dispossessed owner of the soil," and quite at the mercy of the "Great White Chief who from the goodness of his heart had reserved what remained of it for the use of the lawful owners of the whole."

How then is Jesus to be proclaimed by such witnesses?

"The ordinary people, and especially the outcasts of society, joined Christian ranks precisely because they recognised in the person of Jesus one with whom they could identify. The story of Christianity in Kenya, or indeed in the rest of Africa, is essentially one of identification. It mattered little that the messengers of Jesus in Africa came from a different culture. The cultural question aside, the message of the man from Nazareth struck a chord in East Africa. The indigenous people felt that he was one of them... the man of sorrows, misunderstood to crucifixion, and vindicated by the Father in the Resurrection" (Dr. Lawrence Njoroge).

Great was the multitude of the preachers. But Jesus seems to have revealed Himself through some more than others. Fr. Horber set out from Kiambu in February 1918 to conquer the hearts of the Kamba people for Christ. Six Kamba converts from Kiambu will become the nucleus of the new Christian community. He is exchanging places with Fr. Leconte who has been labouring there without result since 1913. By 1922, Fr. Leconte has fallen gravely ill and must be repatriated. Fr. Cayzac takes over and reports on the "destiny of this unfortunate mission." Yet, he continues: "Fr.

Leconte seemed at last on the eve of a great harvest." Yet, of all these early years at All Saints, Pierre Leconte's are the fullest of hope and joy.

1918 saw the Holy Week ceremonies celebrated in full for the first time to packed houses! The following year, a retreat for the Christians was added. Each Christmas is a paroxysm of joy till his last: the now customary bonfire is alight, fireworks shoot up. "By 10 p.m., curious non-Christians have filled up the seats of the church and unfortunately have to be moved to let in the faithful. All sing. All sing in tune and with the most joyous spirit. What a pleasure!" Repeat performance at 8 next morning. "And to think that the Father Visitor from Paris in 1908 wanted to suppress this mission. It is now absolutely thriving."

In 1921, he had organized the Corpus Christi procession with the station for Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at the Mugumo Kikuyu sacred-tree. Many priests attended. Fr. Mitrecey brought the Christians from Lioki, many non-Christians joining in. Just here, nearly twenty years before, Fr. Bernhard had barely escaped being speared to death. "What a change! Where the devil ruled, Our Lord has triumphed." Nearby too, by the stream in a month or so, there will be the annual circumcision of Christian youth, boys and girls, conforming to custom but without customary ceremonies. He has tried to engage in a dialogue with custom. He will manage the remarriage of a young Christian widow by having dowry paid to her brother-in-law to the contentment of all. Even the local elders come and invite him to catechise in their villages. With Fr. Bugeau and three St. Austin catechists, he has spent two solid weeks revising his Catechism in Kikuyu and Prayerbook with Sunday Gospels. In spite of his great illness, he takes his translation work back with him to France. Thinking he had recovered, he returned to East Africa but died soon after, in 1924.

While in France, he had once given a talk entitled the "Catholic Missionary," concluding with these words:

"The missionary, obeying the word of Jesus Christ, 'Go and teach all nations,' goes off to evangelize. He sacrifices parents, homeland, family; he gives to souls in distress all that he has, that is, all the love of his heart and his life too, if

needs be, supported sometimes by generous people who help him, working always, up till the moment when one fever stronger than the others lays him low. He lives there, his face to that heaven in which he has always hoped, begs pardon from God for his passing faults, and dies like a soldier on the field of battle. The land of Africa which he has loved so much will keep him till the day when, by the mercy of God, he hopes to rise in glory."

Pierre Leconte has "died in the breach." Joseph Cayzac, sorely grieved by the loss of a dear confrère, steps into it.

There then unfolds the saga of the girls who wanted to "read." For up to this, the attention of the mission had been turned principally to young men, and to young women only when they were engaged to Christian young men. All other women were completely under the thumb of their pagan menfolk. One day, however, a change came. A group of girls presented themselves to Fr. Cayzac. They wanted to learn to "read." "There's the school," he said, "go right in." "But if our fathers know we are coming here every day, they will lock us up with the sheep and goats. We want to stay here now and not go home." When he had got over his astonishment, Fr. Cayzac told them to come back in a week, and all would be ready. He saw now he would have a great choice in brides for all his young men.

After a week, the six girls are installed in a quickly-built mud "convent." They begin to read, to learn catechism, to attend daily Mass, to cook simple meals. But after a few days, their fathers are on the trail, abusing the priest and accusing him of abducting their children. But the girls insist they have come of their own accord. They are immediately snatched and dragged off. But the next day they are back, badly beaten, but still eager to learn. In the court-case that followed, Fr. Cayzac declares again how freely they had come. The girls say they are ready to die rather than give up their reading. The priest then adds that he has no interest in any future dowry-arrangements. The fathers would get their due in goats. The case is solved. Within a short time, there are thirty in the "convent." The idea spreads to other missions. The Catholic population of Kiambu will soon quadruple. The Christian families settle in the surround-

ing villages within earshot of the church-bell. A larger church is needed.

But Fr. Cayzac needs some rest after 15 years of labour. He must leave his “beloved Kikuyus.” He closes his last entry in the journal, asking, is this provisional or definitive? Fr. Charles Lammer from Mangu takes over without much enthusiasm. His missionary career had been interrupted by several years of imprisonment in India during the war-years, but it will last right up to 1968 when he will have retired back to Mangu. By then, four-fifths of its population will be Catholic. But for now, however, he cannot understand Fr. Cayzac’s regrets at not returning to Kikuyu. He has been appointed to Castlehead Junior Seminary in England. Christmas 1925, there will be no firewoks for Christmas night. No bonfire. On the 31st, he ponders gloomily: *“We are surrounded by nothingness on two sides, the past and the future; and the present, what is it?”* His morale slowly improves in the New Year. In May, the following year, he will have the pleasure of baptizing a large group of young men. But all are immigrants! Some Luo, and the Kikuyu, not from Kiambu but workers from Metumi! All the same, he has begun to provide two Masses on Sundays while awaiting a new church.

The ever-efficient Brother Josaphat arrives, having been organizing materials for several months, quarrying and delivering. Foundations dug, walls rising. The people are thrilled when Bishop Hinsley, the Apostolic Visitor from Rome, comes to see and gives the papal blessing. He tells them, after three years you will need a still bigger church. Reverend Father in an aside mutters to us: “The tribe of Wakikuyu is not in such a hurry!”

In fact, the enthusiasm of opening the new church in mid-1929 is short-lived. A new mood of suspicion sweeps Kikuyu: *“A breath of evolution, like revolution”* (13.10.’29). People are afraid that the Colonial regime wants to snatch even the “Reserve” from them. A rumour spreads when Presbyterians, in Thogoto not far away, were asked to commit themselves against the custom of female “circumcision” by impressing their thumbprint. They had signed away their land, the rumour-mongers told them. And in fact, the “Reserve” was nullified in Western Kenya to allow gold-prospectors to rush in. Now Fr. Lammer finds his people very

suspicious. The *mose* is trying to get your land to hand it to the Government, says the rumour. Patience. It will pass. At year's end, there is the now customary blessing of children on Holy Innocents. A great mob of children are brought along. "So, the future is promising."

In 1932, Fr. Lammer has the joy of his 25th Year Jubilee of Priesthood. His joy is tempered by the death in turn of three Spiritan Brothers who had worked in All Saints: Martial, Theodomir and finally Kilian in February 1933.

"It was a holy Brother who has died. St. Austin's Church was packed. Many Christians had come from Kiambu to show their esteem for the beloved Br. Kilian. He had rendered them so many services, lending tools, sharpening axes, soldering saucepans, and nursing them in their sickness. The services he has given here at the Community of Kiambu during 15 years is incalculable, in the coffee-plantation and factory, in the church as sacristan, in the kitchen, in the garden, everywhere in a word, and all has been so well and so methodically done. As a religious, he was a model without equal."

Brother Martial, for his part, had been Kilian's fellow-townsman and life-long friend from Baden in Germany. In 1907, he had a quasi-miraculous recovery from a near-fatal bout of malaria and remained for long the heart of St. Austin's farm-development. As overwork and ill-health weakened him, he retired to Mangu in the 1920's, devoting himself to the sick and the dying, burying the dead and consoling the bereaved. At his own burial in January 1933, his many Mangu friends disputed with each other over the honour of carrying his body.

Fr. Lammer himself must take some rest in his home-country. Regrettably, one of his last requests to neighbouring elders for a little extra land even to rent, for his out-school at Kanunga, was turned down unanimously. "*It is sad to observe that the Mission, now thirty years in the country, is not more loved.*" Some must sow in tears.

Chapter Six

LIBERATION AND EDUCATION 1899-1968

After having gone all over a great part of Africa, I came to Kabaa and found here an Institution whose like I have seen nowhere else, because of its organization and the admirable spirit which rules here.

Thus wrote Fr. Soul CSSp, official Generalate Visitor. Lest we think this former Kiambu and Mangu pastor may have been biased, listen to another visitor to Kabaa:

"I have come to Kabaa all the way from Tindivanam South India to see the Central Catholic Training School of Kabaa, as I was told by a prominent Education authority who has toured Africa that this was the best school in the Country. I passed 20 days from 14 May to 4 June 1933 in Kabaa, and I am convinced that it is an ideal school.

"Band, Singing, Drill are excellent and always win the approbation of everyone that comes to Kabaa.

"I consider the system of character training exceedingly good and most effective, as is shown by the true family spirit that reigns in the house.

"The general alertness noticeable in every department and, especially in class, is a feature not generally associated with a tropical climate. I consider this due principally to the fact that the boys are kept always busily occupied.

"The aim of the school, *Jishinda ushinde* (Overcome yourself and you will overcome), is being fully realized in the life of the school. Long live Kabaa." P. Marie Conjandaisamy.

A visiting English Catholic layman wrote: "The only thing which could possibly have made Kabaa is the Spirit of God."

A group of Consolata Fathers with their Bishop wrote: "*Rigans montes de superioribus suis.* – Irrigating the mountains from their heights." Date: 11 October 1933.

From the start of their East African ministry, the Spiritans were engaged in school work. When they reluctantly accepted the pastoral care of half a continent in 1862 (Zanzibar in fact means "black continent") from the Reunion diocesan priests, it included one small school with two dozen children. These were boys and girls who had been ransomed. Because of the immense distance to their homes in Central Africa from where they had been snatched these children had to be protected from being kidnapped again, and also, educated to be economically independent – liberation and education were the aim. Fr. Fava's first Catholic school in East Africa therefore, had, an agricultural and industrial bias and contained a hospital, a smithy and several workshops. This was the model which was transferred to the mainland, so that even Religious Education also had a practical aim, to produce catechists. The explorer Stanley said of Bagamoyo: "The missionaries not only instill into the minds of their numerous converts the principles of religion but also educate them in the business of life." Besides, the Vatican also had made it clear that anti-slavery subsidies could be used for the education of those liberated and also for any way to lead African people to liberty.

Within a year of his arrival in St. Austin's, Fr. Hémery had started a school. The same would hold for any new foundation. In 1953, the Religious Superior, Fr. Kelly, could report, "Our Apostolate in the main is worked through the schools." His confrère, fifty years before that (8.7.1901), had many children, boys and girls, from the neighbourhood attending catechism and school at the Mission, from the villages of Njuguna, Gatama, Wandiga, and Mzundo. On 6 January 1902, Johanni, a Kikuyu boy, is baptized, and his classmates are highly impressed by the ceremony. A few days later, a Taita boy joins the group. The same month, classes are functioning also at Kihurunjo's and Kinyanjui's; already Riruta Mission is beginning. Our diarist is dismayed at the duplicity of the colonial officials. He finds out that while saying they were completely in favour if the chief agreed, they had privately warned him not to agree! "*La perfidie*

d'Albion,” our diarist reminds himself again of the proverbial French distrust of England. At the same time, they hear that the Scottish Mission has been offering money to those who would come to them. And when Kinyanjui starts preparing timber for the school, they ask him to do the same for them. This unintelligible bickering only infuriates him.

Back at St. Austin’s, the holy priest finds his school empty. It is the dancing season. But patiently he remarks, “*Man is the same everywhere. He must jump! Let it be called waltz or polka, gichukia or kibata, it's always the same thing. To note: in Africa as in Europe, the dance fails if the airitu (girls) do not turn up. To be thought about. After 15 days at the dancing, his children are back in school.*” (18.9.1902). Next day: “*We receive an epistle from the so-called District Collector of Masailand, in which, simply by the authority which he gives himself, he forbids us to teach at Kinyanjui's! How grotesque! Blessed are you when you are persecuted.*” A week later, le grand Ainsworth writes to say he finds a school at Riruta “unnecessary,” but allows visits. They put up a hut-school not far away at Kibagare, where Fr. Cayzac goes to teach every day without being disturbed, and still another on St. Austin’s land. By September 1904, the opposition has diminished, and they can choose a site at Kinyanjui’s and build a hut-school. In 1909, when Fr. Bugeau is preparing to put up a stone building, it is reported that the Government has told Kinyanjui to send his children to Dr. Scott, the Presbyterian head at Thogoto. After a written complaint, Dr. Scott replies politely, promising to leave the area to the Fathers’ apostolate. Fr. Bugeau pitches his tent there with Br. Josaphat and starts building.

In November, 1910, Fr. Bernhard at St. Austin’s tells us: “*Since a week ago, we have begun catechism to prepare for First Communion. At 8 a.m., there is catechism for fifteen catechumens in the church, while Madeleine, the wife of Joseph, teaches prayers to others, the beginners. At 11 a.m., there is catechism for others, i.e., Kikuyu, the lessons at 8 being in Swahili (for Nandi, Luo, etc.). At 2 p.m., there is catechism in the church for First Communicants, while Madeleine again looks after the beginners. In this way, Fr. Bernhard, though the only Father in the house during the week*

(Fr. Bugeau coming from Riruta on week-ends only), *can nearly cover the catechism lessons and other duties.*"

A few years before (8.9.1907), he described his days at All Saints Kiambu: "*After Mass and Benediction, while non-Christians are instructed in the chapel, the second Father takes the Christians to the schoolroom to teach them singing and give them the catechism of perseverance. On weekdays, while one catechises the less advanced at the sacred tree, the other takes the more advanced for reading, etc. In brief, people are gradually approaching the Mission, and their confidence in us grows.*" Unfortunately, Fr. Fouasse gets involved in building, when Fr. Bernhard departs, and neglects the lessons, as he confesses. But by 1911, it picks up again: school, catechism, singing, every morning in Kikuyu and every evening in Swahili.

About the same time in Riruta, some boys present themselves to Fr. Bugeau and ask to see the holy room where *Ngai* lives. They then say they wish to learn to read but would like to test



A typical bush-school

him first. One of them then produces a paper with a sentence written on it, and all are completely amazed that the priest can decipher it. With the added help of a harmonium, a gramophone, a little football, a spot of hare or monkey hunting, after two years he has a dozen boys learning reading, writing and catechism (Riruta 17.8.1911).

Mangu by that time had four married catechists, and two Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (White Sisters) helped at the centre. Bishop Neville found the two Sisters keeping school in the new stone church as the first mud-built building had collapsed. The children attending were mostly Christian and were learning "Prayers, Catechism, Reading and Writing in the vernacular, Arithmetic and Church Music, such is the Trivium and Quadrivium of the young Mangu University. The young ladies, in addition, are taught sewing. (This last was to develop into a tradeschool). Occasionally, a sprinkling of adults come, Christian or catechumen." There was also a ring of schools in the surrounding villages, each with a resident teacher.

Similar small schools had been started off in the shambas near the railway-line, so that in 1918 when Fr. Blais was asked by the D.C. to let him know what kind of school service he was providing for African people; he could reply that he had 755 pupils in school, mostly Luo men but some women. 518 of these are in Nairobi, and the rest at Ngong, Athi River, Ulu and Kitui. Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and Religion are taught, and in Nairobi 50 are learning English from Fr. Gogarty. It will become common practice to demand simple literacy from Luo converts before Baptism; then, when they migrated again, they would have their prayer-book and catechism in Swahili to keep them in touch. The Swahili reader was a translation of the Consolata Fathers' Kikuyu reader. In 1922, Fr. Leconte would add his admirable prayer-book in Kikuyu with the Sunday Gospels.

It is obvious that Fr. Baur, the historian, is quite accurate in dubbing these first twenty years: the age of the Bush-school. The next twenty he calls the age of the elementary school. One might also call it the age of cooperation, as both Catholic and Protestant leaders came together to make common cause in dealing with the colonial authority, now taking a more active interest in

schools for African people. It was because of these contacts, that Fr. Con McNamara was able to convince his superiors, and his confrères to some extent, of the need to improve our schools, the most urgent task being the training of teachers. Bishop Hinsley, the Apostolic Delegate, was still more forceful and told the Catholics they were far, far behind! In 1933, St. Austin's thought they were doing wonders having 12 candidates for the Elementary Certificate for the first time.

The epic of Kabaa School has been described admirably and at length by Mr. John Osogo in his thesis, and by Fr. Lorcan O'Toole, more briefly, in his history of Machakos. It must suffice here to say that Fr. Witte established in 1926 his Central School dedicated to St. John the Apostle and which was all at once elementary school, trade school, teachers training centre, Brothers novitiate, seminary, and in 1930, high school. After a decade, the high school section is moved to Mangu mission site to become Holy Ghost College, Mangu. About the same time, the Mother House relieved the French Province of the immediate responsibility for staffing the Vicariate and invited the Irish Province to take over. The new foundation would, therefore, be modelled on Irish Holy Ghost colleges, the student-body would be "the lads," the originality of Fr. Witte's approach diluted. It should be added that these colleges had been founded in Ireland by our French Fathers, not only to attract members to the Congregation, but also to liberate native Irish Catholic youth from subservience to the Anglo-Irish imperial ascendancy in their country.

Fr. Peadar Kelly was Headmaster for the first two years, assisted by Frs. J.J. OMeara and G.T. Foley and Mr. Ignatius Mkok, a Makerere-trained Kabaa past pupil. Forty-nine pupils turned up for the opening when the first term started on 11 January 1940. They were divided as follows: Form IV two only, Form III six, Form II twenty-two and Form I nineteen pupils. Among them was a boy called Maurice Otunga, later Cardinal-Archbishop of Nairobi. Later (1947), a boy named John Njenga will be in charge of the Sacristy and Ceremonies. Now Archbishop of Mombasa. Those joining Form I were drawn from the whole country and had already completed six years of elementary/primary school

with, in addition, two years in what was then called Intermediate or Junior Secondary. At first, Form II graduates of Mangu were eligible to sit the Makerere University Entrance. Later, when Makerere was incorporated by London University, the results of the Form IV Cambridge-run examination would give direct entrance to University. One Mangu student entered Harvard University directly from Form IV.

With enormous efforts and often great privations, devoted headmasters and staffs built up the school materially, as Government subsidies are reluctantly made available. The number of students mounts steadily from the initial 49 to 113 in 1950, the first year in which the school has its full quota of students in each form. Mr. John Osogo attributes the growth of the school in numbers and in performance to Fr. J.J. OMeara who had been Head for much of the decade.

In 1940, the new Mangu foundation had still been accepted by all three heads of Vicariates, even though both Kisumu and



Bishop McCarthy with staff and students of Mangu High School - 1946

Nyeri were keen to start their own high schools. It was only the intervention of Bishop Mathews, the Pope's representative, that held the status quo. He had a great admiration for Mangu High and declared it the best he had seen in East or West Africa. However, such a central position could not be held indefinitely. There was, consequently, great pressure on the individual parishes to step up the number of elementary, primary and intermediate feeder schools.

So we find Kiriku, Lioki, All Saints Kiambu, Ruaka, Limuru, Ngarariga, St. Austin's, St. Peter Claver's, Riruta developing their pre-secondary levels. The elders of Kanunga forget their refusal of 1931 and offer land. Fr. OLeary reports a school operating there when he takes over All Saints in 1939. In 1945, Fr. Doody can organize 7,000 people to take part in a Sports Meeting to raise funds for Kanunga school-building. Food is offered to all by the school-parents – the terrible shortage of 1943 has been forgotten. "*Protestants, Independents, Pagans who had hitherto stood aloof are now becoming interested in the organization of the school. Discussions we have had since the sports have brought to light the necessity of getting the people young and old more interested in the Mission and school work.*" So the next big sports meeting with 28 teams competing was organized completely by teacher Lucas Thuo and his lay helpers. The new brass band was also there to show what it could do. It is worth remarking that there were no international funding agencies active as we know them to-day. All funds had to be raised locally. But the generosity of the Kanunga elders is awakened, and in 1946, they offer another four acres and undertake to build the school-extension.

Expansion around Mangu mission had no great obstacles; Fr. McGill could show the Visitor from the MotherHouse the seven schools and churches he had developed without much hindrance. Limuru, Lioki, and All Saints Kiambu, on the other hand, were hemmed in by settlers' estates or by AC or CSM or "Independent" developments. These Independent churches and schools had developed rapidly in the thirties as an attempt to preserve traditional Kikuyu values in a modern setting. They became the seed-bed for political independence. Jomo Kenyatta had his office in Kiamwangi independent school.

Fr. Frederick Bugeau CSSp in his long essay of 1912 entitled, "The warlike spirit of the Kikuyu," considered that "the young Kikuyu, though prevented from fighting, was never cured of his warlike spirit. Like his model, the leopard, he might have to lie low for long periods. This is prudence, not fear: *Kwigita, ti guoya*.



*Fr. McGill (right) with Mzee Kenyatta,
Chief Muoho and Fr. A. Lynch
in detention camp*

Taking employment is spying on the enemy. Submission is purely tactical. Everything done by the white man is understood as a form of oppression. Those forced to work are "soldiers" and return home with the honours of war. The elders' songs keep such memories alive." Frederick Bugeau, retired in France in 1952, could not have been astonished at the violent explosion of the Mau Mau. Like a dormant volcano, each decade since the invasion had registered its protest.

All Saints Kiambu is painting the church in preparation for its Jubilee, 50 years since the foundation, when Chief Waruhiu is assassinated, and the "Emergency" declared by the Imperial Government. Troops are transferred from the Suez Canal Zone. Kenyatta and other leaders are arrested and put in detention. The Kikuyu are now truly under siege. The anti-European oathing had begun several years before but now continues at an accelerated pace. Everything non-African is targeted: not only officials, askaris, military, settlers, their kin and all their collaborators, but also, an institution like Mangu teaching foreign subjects, doing foreign exams, subsidised by the colonial regime. Mangu students are shunned at home. The whole colonial set-up is rejected by Mau Mau and must be violently destroyed and original

freedom restored. Even riding a British-owned bus in Nairobi is declared a capital offence, deserving death. Many agree with the aim, without approving the means. Mangu High School is given a permanent garrison.

In the midst of this state of war and the enormous disruption it brought about, school goes on. Classes. Examinations. Budgets. Football matches. Basketball. Volleyball. Choir. "We are supposed to be shot but not particularly worried." (14.10.52). World War Two got scant attention from our diarists. It is a bother for the students to write duplicate answers to examinations. They might be torpedoed en route to London. But now the shooting can be heard, and our schoolmasters are awakened from their political complacency. After a shoot-out in the vicinity in April 1953, it became obvious that a lot of innocent people were being shot under cover of a general suspicion. In June 1954, the diarist complains that "*the Home Guards are becoming as lawless as the Mau Mau and have indulged in an orgy of robbery and thuggery.*"

With villagization in June 1955, he thinks "*the Government seems determined to 'rehabilitate' the Kikuyu by brutalizing and debasing them. This single step is probably the greatest tragedy since the Emergency began.*" What good are bursaries for education if, when "*the Kikuyus leave Mangu, they find they are outcasts? 'No Kikuyu need apply' is the slogan of the employment agencies in Railway, Banks, Survey, etc.*"

Except for some internal trouble, the school survives the Emergency unscathed, even though hundreds of people have died violently in the neighbourhood throughout the decade. Thousands also had been taken into detention throughout the whole country. 40,000 spread through 47 camps. "Hundreds were executed, thousands shot out of hand. One hundred white lives were lost." (Pakenham). Fr. Patrick Fullen was asked to assist at over 800 hangings. The cost in cash to the government in London of 60 million sterling pounds was found too expensive. The result was the release of Kenyatta and the abrogation of colonial rule – Uhuru.

Who can explain the extraordinary spiritual effect of these troubled times on the Holy Ghost Mission? The twice-attempted

shooting of Fr. Patrick McGill, rather than deter the people, seemed to open their hearts and draw people and pastor more closely together. Thousands joined with him to celebrate his priestly Jubilee in June 1953. What other grave of a Holy Ghost missionary is visited daily even today? People crowded to night-vigils of prayer. Christmas Midnight Mass must continue till morning. Throngs filled the churches on Sundays. The only complaint Mangu people had about their new church was that they had not been asked to contribute! Near Riruta, “*people are being stopped and threatened on their way to Mass and told they were spies and informers. Yet the crowds are increasing*” (23.2.54).

(The Consolata Fathers experienced a doubling of conversions in the same years.)

The schoolsystem expanded rapidly as Independent schools which closed down opted to open under Catholic supervision. Fr. P. Kelly reports of Lioki in 1953: “One of these Independent schools reopened under our supervision: now four others have expressed the wish to come under the Catholic Church. Mass has been said at one of these schools (Nyanduma) every Sunday, and in February over 600 people, who before were untouchable, attended and began to study the catechism. Today our hope in the Kikuyu country was never so high.”

At All Saints Kiambu, there are so many people for Baptism that Frs. Richard Joyce and Michael Duggan ask others to come and help them, even though spread over several days. Archbishop McCarthy asks to have the group for Confirmation divided. Mass is said for the first time in Tinganga 10 miles away, visited fruitlessly 50 years before. 1500 people attend and continue every Sunday.

31 December 1957: Thus ends another glorious year for the Church in Kikuyu country. Five new churches blessed and opened in one year: Gatitu, Miguta, Mangu, Riruta and Kagwe. Deo Gratias. At Riruta, Fr. Meade and his confrère, Kevin Carey, break records by baptizing 2,000 people in that one year. Even at Kamiti Mau Mau Detention Centre, Mass is being said regularly and appreciated. Githiga Mau Mau Centre has a Catholic Church served weekly from Lioki. Having been transferred back there, Fr. Bannon writes: “*Lioki has changed. How much more friendly*

the people have become!" In Mangu, the Bishop is impressed by "*the spirit of friendliness among the people which was sadly lacking for so long*" (19.7.53). Dedan Kimathi, the arch-antiChristian, asks for the priest before his execution.

With the increasing demand, the pastor of the Diocese sees himself short of priests and decides to hand over Mangu High School to the Marianist Order (1961). It should not be thought that the Fathers on the staff had held aloof from the pastoral ministry. On the contrary, one must wonder at the zeal of these overworked teachers giving themselves to week-end ministry in the neighbouring churches and, in holiday time, giving retreats throughout the whole of East Africa. Fr. Flavin at Kalimoni with its seventeen out-schools or churches, was full of gratitude: "*The ministry for Kalimoni, Thika, Kilima Mbogo and Kitito Mission is well attended to, and thanks is due to the Holy Ghost College at Mangu*" (March 1941). He could have added Ruai, Sukari, Juja Farm and Kia-ora who also could expect a Sunday Mass. (The Kilima Mbogo T.T. community will take over the ministry with the same generous spirit.)

Other less spectacular but valuable high schools will be opened within the decade: St. Joseph's at Githunguri, Aquinas at Makadara, St. Theresa's Eastleigh, Ituru, Muhocho, Kiriku, St. Joseph the Worker – a new day-school at Mangu, Kanunga, Ngenia, Ruku, Gatitu, Mururia.

But where did the wind of change blow from? What changed the hearts of the Kikuyu? How did they come finally to distinguish priest from planter, Father from farmer? Was it the speech of the Archbishop in Mangu telling them that the priest is different, or his pastoral letter condemning Mau Mau? The Mangu diarist attributes the change to the "*efforts of Fr. OLeary who has associated himself so much with the people*" (19.7.53). Or was it the fact that *Mubia* stayed put while others took off? Was it perhaps that word of the departing Orthodox Bishop to the Independent Church: "Remember the Catholics are your brothers"? Or was the underlying antagonism of so many colonial officials over the decades now turning to our advantage? Or could it be the food-aid distributed by Fr. McGill to a people under siege? Father Jerome Doody had another idea and answers: "That's the

Carmelites!" – it was an answer to the prayers of the Carmelite Sisters.

We have heard before the desperate pleas and prayers of many Holy Ghost missionaries for the conversion of their chosen people. They were in fact a prayerful body of men, even admired by Mother Dympna, the Carmelite foundress, for their piety. It was not only in jest that the diarist calls them monks. Their early rising for common and personal prayer, their daily Masses and Divine Office, their midday, evening and night prayers together, their quarterly and annual spiritual retreats, their regular checking up on each other with visits from religious and ecclesiastical superiors or from Rome or Paris.

Bishop Heffernan thought it was not enough. He invited the Sisters of Mount Carmel to come and pray on the spot. The foundation stone was laid by the retired saintly Bishop Shanahan of Southern Nigeria, also invited by Bishop Heffernan, who was to become their chaplain. "Destined to be the silent source through which streams of blessings will descend on the land... the new Carmel must be considered a most important step in the evangelization of these territories" (Catholic Times). It was practically 40 years to the day since the first Mass in Nairobi.

Bishop Heffernan had also asked another "saint" to walk among us. This was the Legion of Mary Envoy, the gentle but powerful Edel Quinn, now declared Venerable. She arrived in Nairobi in 1936. The secret of the Legion is to harness the spiritual energies of each Christian young, old or infirm, to the work of evangelization. The Apostolic Delegate, Bishop Riberi's letter of recommendation, called the Legion of Mary to the attention of all heads of missions as the "nearest approach to the ideal in apostolic method." Consider that the first praesidium in Nairobi within one year had recruited 1,000 people into the catechumenate. At the inspired word of Edel Quinn, hundreds of praesidia sprang up and prospered. Consider also that although these individual praesidia were racially segregated, Senatus and Acies brought together round Mary's table all her divided children. In the Legion each lay Christian learns to recognize her or his Christian responsibility. Priests have their eyes opened to the wonderful work of the Spirit in the laity, their fellow-members in Christ the Lord. Edel's heartbreak



The venerable Edel Quinn

was to see "work in abundance and people ready to do it but not given the chance." Now they are.

When Edel, in 1941, was forced through illness to rest in a sanatorium, she continued her apostolate by correspondence. (Her letters are numbered in the thousands). Fr. Austin Lynch reported to her from Lioki:

"300 Baptisms have taken place since Easter, and over 1,000 catechumens are now under instruction. You will be glad to learn that Mangu Mission has just established three Senior praesidia, which are doing fine. In the nearby Nyeri Vicariate (during the war staffed by Spiritans), the Legion is also making splendid progress. My own praesidium is joining in the extension campaign. I was proud to see my president, a Kikuyu, journeying to Fr. Grogan's mission several times to explain the Legion and getting it working there." And to Dublin he wrote: "Were you to listen to the reports read by the different praesidia at our Curia meeting, you would realise that the Legion here is one of the main instruments in the evangelization of this country. As far as my own Mission is concerned, there is no comparison between my own personal output in the teaching of catechism



Waiting for Fatima Statue at Kilima Mbogo



Procession with statue of Our Lady of Fatima

and that of the Legionaries. It is most heartening to see the very evident influence of the Legion in the spiritual formation of the Legionaries themselves."

It was obvious too that the Kikuyu, with their usual intelligence and adaptability, had taken to the discipline of the Legion of Mary as their forefathers had adopted the high discipline of the Maasai phalanx centuries before.

As Bishop Suenens wrote: "Edel was profoundly conscious that the Legion can bring a practical and durable human education. The experience of each new day taught her more surely that the Legion was an instrument of Christian vitality, not only for the community, but for the Legionaries themselves who were the first to benefit by it. The evidence shows that in every place where the Legion truly penetrates, a breath of the apostolic spirit passes. When Mary is present, a Pentecostal wind rises." And Bishop Heffernan: "After a year of Miss Quinn's work, the atmosphere of my diocese had changed. Without any noise she had brought a germ of life. Her coming among us was a direct and special favour from God for my Vicariate."

Mangu Journal reads: 12.5.1944: Sudden news over the wireless of Miss Quinn's death. Right up to the end Miss Quinn was active. Our Mother Mary, whom she so loyally served, must have been the source whence came her unfailing energy. Never, physically, in good health, she was always eager to be about her loved task. May she rest in peace. Frs. OSullivan and OMeara went in for the funeral and Solemn Requiem.

It was left to the next Bishop, John McCarthy to invite the Virgin Mary herself. This was the visit of the Pilgrim Statue from Fatima, "the greatest religious event of 1949," as Fr. Kelly reported to Paris.

"Kenya is a worldly Colony where the here counts much more than the hereafter. It must have got a rude shock indeed during the days of March 24–28. There was no question of hiding our light under a bushel. About 4.40 p.m., a crowd of 5,000 strong were at Eastleigh Airport to meet the statue. From thence by car-procession to the centre of the City, the Law Courts, where it was received by the Fathers of Holy Family Church (Fr. Tom McEnnis was then in charge), and taken on foot-procession to the Church

for an all-night vigil. The following day there was a magnificent display of faith and devotion in a candle-light procession through the City. Over 20,000 people paid homage to the Queen of Heaven, marching with the statue to the accompaniment of rosaries and hymns. At Pontifical High Mass in the open, 30,000 people were on their knees."

"*Mangu Journal: 20 March '49: Fr. Macaulay comes with the news.*

25 March '49: A day of kazi to prepare. The boys are enthusiastic. Ten of the seniors are to go to Nairobi as stewards.

26 March '49: The Sisters and sacristans erect a beautiful throne in front of Our Lady's altar. Fr. McGill spends most of the morning hearing Confessions. Everyone is taking the message of prayer and penance seriously. All assemble at the end of the long avenue about 1 p.m. The statue arrives, and the ceremony begins. About 5 or 6,000 people present. Four High School boys in soutane and surplice bring the statue. It appears very lifelike, noble and sad. Flower-girls strew petals before Our Lady's path. Rosaries, prayers of Fatima and hymns. Fr. McGill preaches eloquently in Kikuyu after he and Fr. Murphy have enthroned the statue. Act of Consecration by Fr. McGill and people. Please God, Mary has left a blessing on Mangu.

At Kilima Mbogo, the Madonna is welcomed by Fr. Macaulay and seminarians, Fr. Ellis and his Teacher Trainees and people; at Kalimoni, by Fr. Whelan, Sisters and their Approved School girls.

"*All Saints Kiambu: 13 March '49: Fr. Doody and Fr. McGeogh went today to the Curia meeting of the Legion. Fr. Doody gave us first news of the arrival of the statue of Our Lady of Fatima in East Africa. He stressed the importance of the event and asked the Legionaries to redouble their prayers and devotion so that the coming would bring God's blessing on East Africa.*

25 March '49: All during the week, the 7.30 Mass has been very well attended. Each morning many received the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist. The coming of the statue certainly seems to have aroused much fervour.

Today at 1.45 p.m. the statue of Our Lady of Fatima arrived. About 2,000 people were here to welcome it. The procession formed on the main road and went first to Loreto Convent (to be occupied on April 8). A special altar has been set up and beautifully deco-

rated by Br. Claver to receive the statue. For over an hour, the people in an overcrowded church sang hymns and recited the Rosary.

27 March '49: About 450 people left here this morning to attend the ceremonies in Nairobi. One lorry did as many as five rounds.

Our diarist is touched to see very many Indians praying to our Mother. "Please God," he prays, "their day of grace is near." Another report describes how their Highnesses, the Sultan and Sultana, Muslims, came in their car to pay their respects when the statue arrived at Zanzibar Airport. "We may safely say that the beneficent hand of Mary casts graces far and wide." However, the newspapers in Nairobi did not seem to notice! (Journal: St.Peter Claver).

The 1953-1954 Marian Year was another occasion, greatly emphasized by Archbishop McCarthy, to invoke the help of Mary. "Every effort must be made to instil devotion to Our Lady," he insisted, according to Lioki diarist John Reidy, "to be expressed in two ways: (a) regular attendance at Holy Mass and the Sacraments, (b) daily recitation of the Rosary – if possible the Family Rosary.

8 March '54: The Procession in honour of Our Blessed Lady ordered by His Grace for the first Sunday of each month was held yesterday.

16 March '54: The atmosphere has been tense for some time. Small Mau Mau bands have been around. In the Mchana Estate nearby, three were killed and two captured. Some headmen killed on Pitmore's Estate.

26 March '54: Yesterday was a big day for the Kikuyu. A Day of Prayer for peace. Fr. Doody talked on Our Lady in his own sincere and impressive way. The devotion of the people seemed to reach its climax towards the end when all joined in with great gusto to sing the Litany of Loretto.

First Sunday of May: Two Masses with the Marian Year Procession. A huge crowd attended.

15 May '54: A Day of Prayer for all our teachers. The intention was that of the Marian Year.

23 May '54: Children's Day of Prayer.

16-20 August: Days of Mau Mau battles: alert almost every night.

5-8 December '54: High Masses and Processions with a General Communion for the intentions of the Marian Year.

Appropriately enough, the permission to open a Girls' Intermediate School, applied for at the beginning of the year, is granted in September. Lioki Mission is now in full expansion with Masses being said as far away as Nyanduma and Kamburu, Githunguri, Gathugu and soon Githiga. A plot for a new Mission is sought at Kagwe, and Fr. Doody will be living there by September 1956. Similarly, Fr. John Gannon replaces the ailing Mel Bannon and will open Miguta Mission the same year. In the new forcibly-formed villages, 15 prayer-houses are built, the membership of the Legion of Mary doubles, several new schools are opened.

The next message from Our Lady was brought by the Holy Cross Father Patrick Peyton with the Rosary Crusade to all the countries of Eastern Africa and in Kenya to all big centres.

"25,000 Nairobians in the African Stadium heard his sermon translated by Fr. Maurice Otunga, secretary to the Apostolic Delegation, in a voice which reached every corner of the vast ground: A family at prayer can become a country at prayer. A country at prayer is a country at peace" (Catholic Times). It is June 19, 1955, and Kenya is at war with itself. "Two days before, up to 30,000 Kikuyus came on foot, by cycle, and in lorries to Kiamwangi to pray for peace and order. The people poured into the playing field of the Catholic Mission School, brightly dressed in their best clothes and singing hymns as they came. Everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves."

All Saints Kiambu: 3 June '55: Preparations are in full swing for the Rosary Rally to be held in Loretto Sisters' school ground.

12 June '55: The Corpus Christi procession was held today. The Blessed Sacrament was carried to Turitu Village, and Benediction given at two altars in the village. The procession was supposed to be the biggest ever seen in Kiambu. Many pagans joined the procession on the return from the village.

17 June '55: The day was excellent as regards the weather. Fr. Peyton arrived at 2 p.m. from Kiamwangi, Gatitu Mission, where he had held a rally at 11 a.m. Gatitu rally numbered 25,000. Kiambu ranged from 8,000 to 10,000. His Excellency, the Apos-

tolic Delegate, Archbishop Knox and His Grace, Archbishop McCarthy, were in attendance. A crowd of 1500 walked praying from Lioki Mission. 23 lorries packed with people came from Limuru. Riruta was also well represented (three lorry-loads with Fr. Meade). Fr. Peyton impressed the people very much and moved many to tears. Interpreter was Josephat Kamiri from Lioki. After Benediction, Fr. Peyton was literally mobbed by the people. Women from Turitu village brought potatoes and eggs and presented them to him. It was really a splendid gathering and included many pagans from neighbouring villages.

4 July '55: Fr. Daniel O'Leary stayed with us while giving a retreat to the Teacher Trainees in Loreto Convent.

10 July '55: At midnight to-night, the Government's surrender terms are to be withdrawn. Any Mau Mau who will not have surrendered before that time will have his lands forfeited.

Fr. Superior said evening Mass in Kamiti Detention Camp this afternoon.

1 November '55: Titular Feast of the Mission. Solemn High Mass at 10 a.m. for Brother Claver on the occasion of his Golden Jubilee. 33 Fathers from various missions, together with Brothers Mamertus, Josaphat and Florian, attended.

14 November '55: Form II finished school today. Coffee-picking is still going strong, and Br. Claver feels he could do with more labour.

18 December '55: Fr. Soughley said Mass in Kamiti Prison Camp and was very impressed by the large number at Holy Communion. His Grace, Archbishop McCarthy, visited the camp recently and was pleased with the work we are doing there. (Another time he will say Mass in Githiga Camp).

25 December '55: Crowds received Holy Communion at all three Masses. The day was grand and sunny.

31 December '55: Te Deum was sung in thanksgiving for the blessings of the past year.

9 January '56: The Intermediate and Primary Schools reopened today and the attendance was beyond all expectations.

The Religious Superior reported to Paris that during the Crusade 100,000 people had signed cards pledging to say the Rosary in the home. But All Saints have not had enough. In 1956 reports

of school extensions are interspersed with those of their own Rosary Rallies and revised new-style Holy Week services. The Easter Vigil must of course be an allnight vigil. In April a Rosary Rally in Kiambaa (a place with few Catholics) is very well attended. On Whitsunday, a very large number of parishioners attended a Rally at All Saints itself. 4,000 people joined the Corpus Christi procession from Kanunga to Turitu; Frs. Reidy (Martin, come from Limuru) and Doody and Michael Duggan had to take turns over the long route. In October, Rosary Rallies are held each Sunday, the largest being at Njeku, the least Catholic village of all. Many travelled long distances on foot from other villages to attend. Two parishioners spoke at each of these rallies on some aspects of the mystery of our Blessed Mother. New schools or extensions are reported at Gathanga, Laini, Ngegu, Karuri, Kihara, Riabhai, Ndenderu. Fr. Joyce, who takes over in 1957, soon has scores of volunteer catechists, each with seven catechumens, teaching them in their own homes. At Muthurua and Njeku, large numbers of children are catechised by schoolboys.

On Sunday, 17 February 1957, an immense crowd estimated variously at 20,000, 30,000, and 50,000, gathered at Lioki for the first Priestly Ordination in Kiambu: that of Fr. John Njenga, now Archbishop of Mombasa. On the following day, he offered his First Solemn Mass at Kiriku, and on Wednesday in "a most impressive ceremony" baptized his own mother before Mass and gave her First Holy Communion. On another day, people filled the field at All Saints to join in the Mass with him. On the following Sunday, Mangu High School students joined a large crowd in the football field for Mass with their past student. Fr. John then joined them for a tea-party. The next day, another past student, Maurice Otunga, became the first Kenyan Bishop. (Over the same week-end, it was announced that Zanzibar Island would be detached from Nairobi jurisdiction and form a new diocese with Mombasa. Fr. Eugene Butler, parish priest of Parklands, would be the new Bishop.)

Numerous Diocesan clergy, both from Nyeri and Kilimanjaro, had attended John Njenga's Ordination to the Priesthood. Many present may have wondered why it had taken so long to have a Catholic priest from Kiambu!

The Spiritan's second Founder, Francis Libermann, had always insisted that missionaries should found a local clergy. In fact, he considered it the principal function of the missionary! And the education of children was to be undertaken precisely with this in view. In 1840, four Senegalese had been ordained priests after attending the Holy Ghost Seminary in Paris. In 1852, the first priest ordained in West Africa had been educated in France. Fr. William Jouga CSSp ordained in 1864, had been educated throughout in Africa.

On the other hand, early attempts by the Spiritans in East Africa ended in failure. Eight prospective candidates entered the seminary in Zanzibar in 1868. Fr. Horner, in founding Bagamoyo, the first foundation on the mainland, wanted it to be "a seedbed

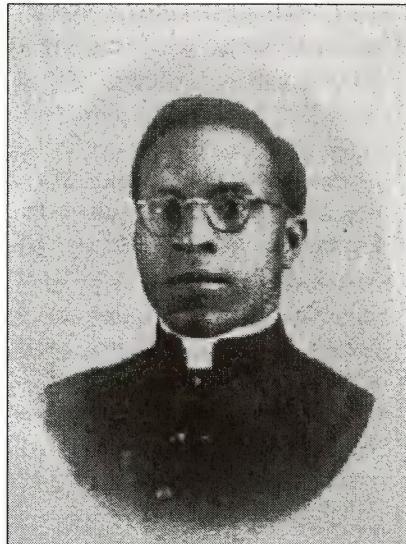


*Ordination of
Maurice Otunga
as a Bishop - 1957*

for priests." In 1870, there are twelve seminarians, soon rising to twenty. Unfortunately, three Spiritans, sent in turn to run the work, fell ill and gave up. Fr. Horner, reporting to Rome in 1878, admits that he does not consider any of the candidates suitable. The 40 students reported there in 1880 are preparing to be catechists. The attempt has been abandoned. Jesuits who tried in Madagascar and Benedictines in Tanganyika also failed initially.

It was left to the White Father Streicher in Uganda to make the breakthrough. The Vatican told his Bishop Hirth, "If you can have martyrs, you should be able to have priests." A seminary is founded in 1893, and the first two ordinations take place in 1913, and from then on an average of one a year. In Tanganyika, the first ordination is in 1917. In Nyeri, two are ordained in 1927.

It is only with the opening of Kabaa, that Fr. Witte dreams of producing priests and clothes all his students in the *kanzu*. Three are sent to the Regional Seminary at Kilimanjaro but fail to persevere. In the thirties, Fr. Loogman (of Swahili fame) is teaching Philosophy and Theology at Kabaa. When, in 1937, the candidates are asked to make a definitive choice, only one remains firm, Paul Njoroge. (It must have been humbling for these Spiritans to know that their confrères at Kilimanjaro had 100 young men preparing for the priesthood at the same period.) Paul Njoroge has already held out for many years against the wish of his parents, both Catholics. He is then sent to Rome to finish his studies as the Vatican is inviting each diocese to send a candidate. He was ordained in December 1942 but tragically died of T.B. in 1944, when preparing to return to Kenya after World War Two. News reached Nairobi on the 29th of April, and a Solemn Req-



Fr. Paul Njoroge

uiem is sung in his home-parish, Limuru, on May 1st. On the following day another Requiem is celebrated at All Saints "with a very good attendance. People seem deeply moved by the sad news of the death of our first Kikuyu priest."

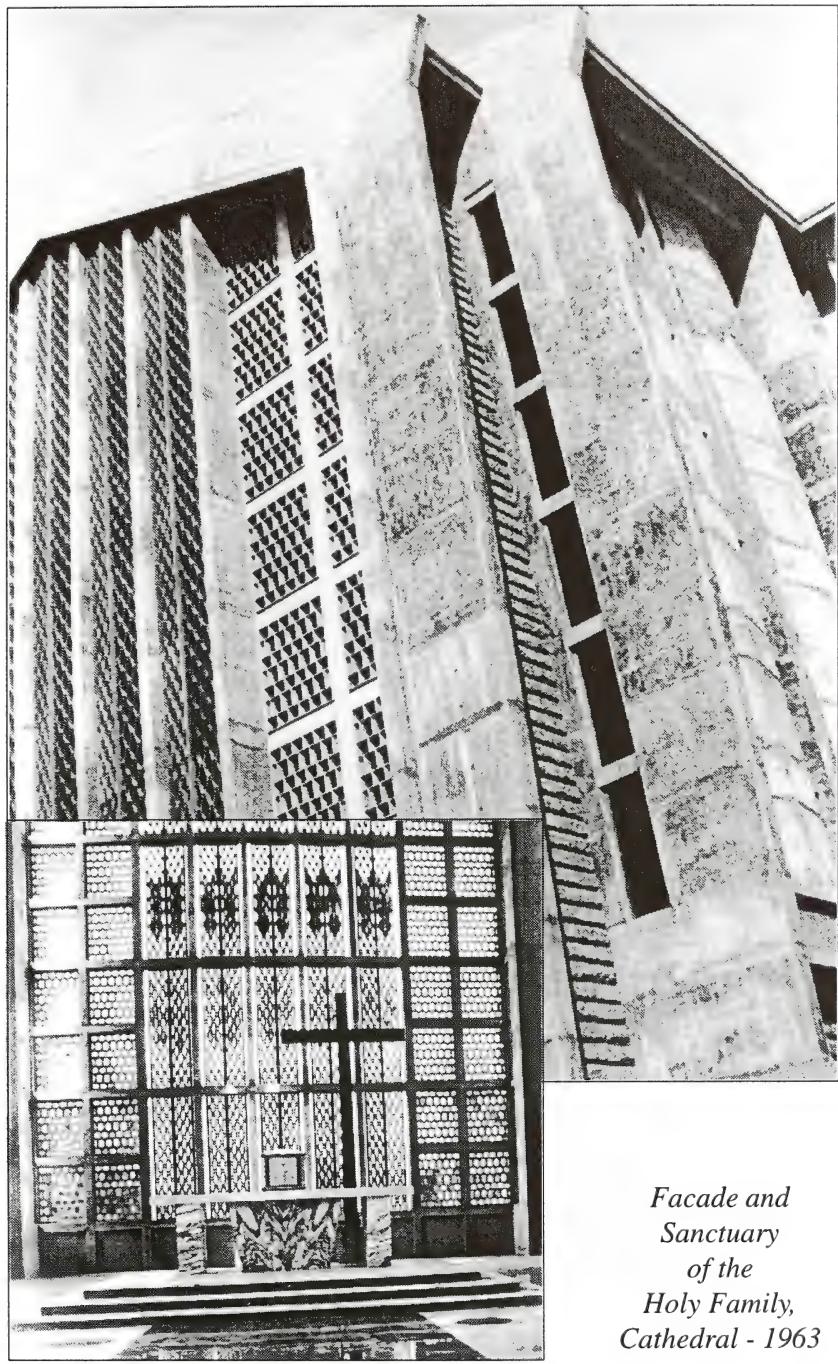
As a compensation, for All Saints Day in 1945, Fr. Benedetto Kegothono; from Nyeri is invited to preside at the celebration Fr. Joyce and Fr. M. Higgins are deacon and sub-deacon respectively. *"A tremendous crowd of people were delighted at seeing the African priest. They seemed deeply impressed by him and his sermon was most appropriate to the occasion – the Communion of Saints. It is hoped that the good impression made by Fr. Benedetto will help in the present drive for vocations for the Seminary."* At Lioki the following Sunday, *"he made a wonderful impression on all – a very sincere holy priest."* A few days later, he is welcomed enthusiastically at Mangu. In 1948 he is invited back to preach the people's retreat in Kiangunu and visited Mangu High School again. A few years later, Fr. Cesaro Gatimu, another Kikuyu priest from Nyeri (later Bishop), *"whose parents live near Lioki (Kagwe, in fact), gave the students' retreat and preached at a parish allnight vigil"* (Mangu 4.7.'54). In 1958, Fr. Joseph Kilasara from Kilimanjaro gave the students' retreat. But the next local ordination to be reported is that of Raphael Ndingi, now Archbishop of Nairobi, and Urbanus Kioko, now Bishop of Machakos. January 1961.

Both Archbishop and Bishop were first trained as teachers in Kilima Mbogo where the Lioki TTC had been transferred. They then completed their secondary studies at Kilima Mbogo Junior Seminary under Fr. Niall Macaulay. It had been opened in 1946 by Fr. Austin Lynch with Standard Four, though in fact already initiated by Fr. Colleton in Lioki. Later again, it is moved to Kiserian, near Ngong, under the title "Queen of Apostles." Over the years, the diary reveals the names of other students which may be familiar to the Kenyan reader: Nicodemus Kirima, Isidore Onyango, Gabriel Kimotho, George Gathongo, Joseph Kamano, Hilary Kailu, David Njuguna. John Njenga's name appears in 1948 as that of a student-teacher and Assistant to the Rector. The pattern is established of a year's probation for future Senior Seminarians. They will then attend the Regional Senior Seminary in Kibosho or Morogoro. The new Kenya National Seminary of St. Thomas

Aquinas will be confided to the Dominicans by the Hierarchy. It will open in 1963.

After his Ordination, the young Fr. Njenga, after a short pastoral experience in Kiriku, is appointed to the staff of Queen of Apostles Seminary and later promoted Vice-Rector. The community were very actively involved in outside ministry. While the Spiritans developed the Maasai stations of Kiserian, Ongata Rongai, Mbagathi, Ngong, Matasia and Magadi, Fr. Njenga used his weekends and vacations in the Kikuyu Missions, especially Riruta, where in one year he 'fixed up' 100 marriages. He also broadcast several times on radio. In 1960, the Maasai stations are handed over to the care of the Mill Hill Fathers who are forming the Prefecture of Ngong. The seminary buildings would normally be ceded to the new administration, but by agreement the Nairobi Spiritans continue their seminary work while preparing the present site and buildings at Ruaraka. The move will take place in 1968. In the meantime, while Fr. Njenga leaves for courses in London and Rome, the Deacons Raphael Ndingi and Urbanus Kioko arrive for their Ordination retreat. In the New Year (1961) they are ordained at their home parishes: Kabaa and Kilungu, respectively. Fr. Kioko will be appointed to Kanzalo, Fr. Ndingi to the recently founded town parish of Our Lady of Visitation Makadara. Fr. Njenga, after his studies, will come there as Father-in-charge and Vicar-General of the Diocese. 1962 adds four more Kikuyu priests.

1963 sees the Colonial Power withdraw, and the independent Kenya declare Uhuru. 1964, a Republic is declared. All were grateful to God for the peaceful transition of power, but everyone knew that the management of schools by the Mission would soon be brought into question. Even before Independence Day Archbishop McCarthy, attending the Vatican Council, must fly back from Rome owing to the difficult situation which has arisen re management of schools (Lioki 21.10.63). The blow falls with the Education Act of 1968. Schools in future are to be Government-run. "*It takes schools out of our hands completely*" (Riruta 1.2.68). It is the end of an era! Fr. John OMeara, however, former Headmaster of Mangu and Education Secretary and now parish priest of St. Francis Xavier's, Parklands, does not seem to notice.

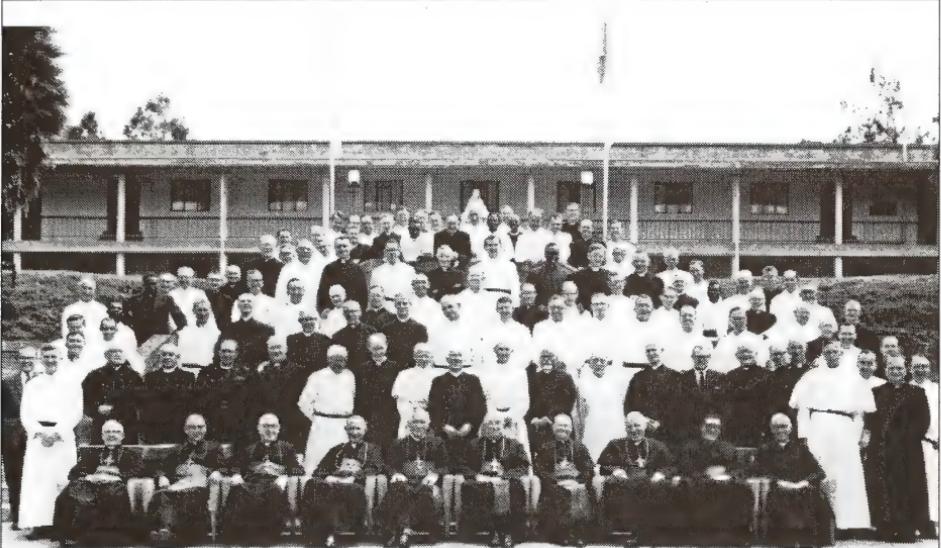


*Facade and
Sanctuary
of the
Holy Family,
Cathedral - 1963*

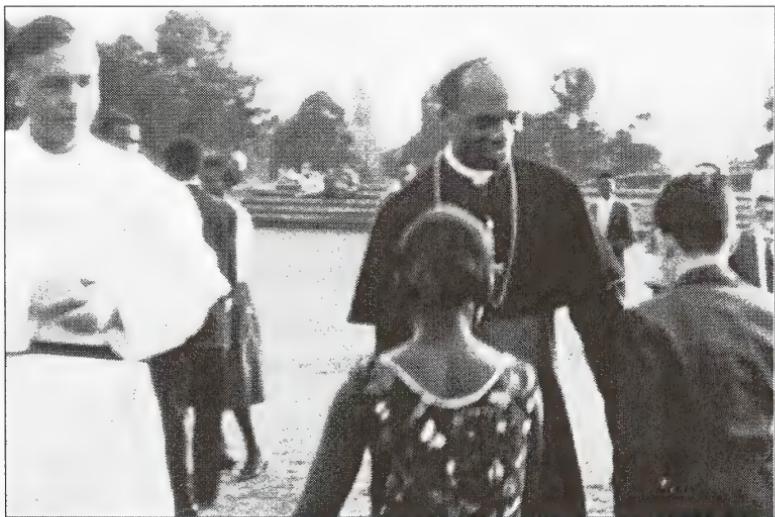
In the diary he kept at the time, his only concern seems to be whether he can continue to have a Sister to run the parish kindergarten. Fr. OMeara never even mentions the decisive Act of Parliament nor even the discussions leading up to it. The history of over a century's efforts in schools ends with a whimper and not with a bang.

There had been in fact a 'bang' on the centenary date itself. To commemorate 100 years of Spiritan presence in East Africa, in 1963, the new Holy Family Cathedral Church had been opened and blessed by Cardinal Rugambwa on Saturday, July 6th, just months before the final liberation of the country. Luncheons, dinners, a garden party were laid on for church and state dignitaries. Monday, July 8th, saw the vast and beautiful building jam-packed with school-children. "*I never knew we had so many school-children here in the city. It was a wonderful sight and a most encouraging one for the future of the Church in Kenya,*" Fr. Shannon writes (Parklands 8.7.'63). God had His own plans for the future.

In the same Parklands Community Journal for 5 July 1969, John OMeara will register his shock at the news of the murder of Tom Mboya, his "*pleasant hard-working student in Holy Ghost College Mangu. May God be good to him.*" We might pray the same prayer for himself. He dies suddenly in February 1970, following closely his friend, Patrick McGill (17.1.1970), lately promoted a Kikuyu elder. Both were buried by another Mangu past student, new Coadjutor Archbishop of Nairobi, Maurice Otunga. The end of the decade sees also the departure of other veterans: John Reidy, Barney Culligan, Charles Lammer and, more tragically, the young and promising Fr. Isidore Onyango. More optimistically, the diary also records that the newly-ordained Pelin D'Souza, has celebrated Mass where he had formerly been an altar-server. The new normative Mass is introduced. Pope Paul VI visits East Africa to canonize the Uganda Martyrs, meets all the Bishops of Africa, and ordains new ones, among whom Raphael Ndingi Mwana 'a Nzeki for the new Diocese of Machakos. And God fulfils Himself in many ways.



Group photograph at St. Mary's for CSSp centenary - 1963



Cardinal Rugambwa with Fr. Macaulay & guests at Centenary Garden-Party

Chapter Seven

EPILOGUE

The present writer entered the story in 1972 when he was appointed to the Queen of Apostles Seminary parish of Ruaraka, on arrival in Kenya. A recent General Chapter had encouraged Spiritans living in the same locality to meet regularly to discuss their life and apostolate together in "extended" communities. To his dismay, the regular theme of meetings was "disengagement." In other words, the time had come for the Spiritans to pack their bags and go elsewhere, as if to say that our work here was done.

And he had just arrived!

True, since a few years before, the Vatican, marking a stage in development, had withdrawn the diocese from the traditional care (*jus commissionis*) of the Holy Ghost Congregation. It was no longer H.G.M. Holy Ghost Mission, but Diocese of Nairobi entrusted to its Archbishop in communion with the Pope. In spite of the repeated assertions of the new Archbishop, named Cardinal in February 1973, "You missionaries are still needed," the discussion continued. While other missionaries, like Consolata or the Precious Blood, Mercy, Holy Rosary, or Loreto Sisters, Sisters of St. Francis or of Our Lady of Africa, all adapted readily to the new system, many Spiritans seemed traumatized by the new Kenyan Government's rejection of our traditional role in schools and also by the apparently easy acquiescence of the Bishops. "*All of us were rather apprehensive of our future as missionaries*" (Lioki 3.9.'64). It must also be said that the public utterances of Government officials were not always complimentary to the Holy Ghost Fathers (e.g., Eastleigh 8.11.64). Nearly all the community journals have now fallen silent. "Journal not be-

ing kept," the Religious Superior observes and adds enigmatically, "It is understandable" (Riruta 21.3.74). A priest is heard to say: "We are no longer needed." While the facts belied such statements, many young appointees seem to have been disturbed by them.

The City of Nairobi was expanding and was planned to expand even more rapidly. The rural population of the diocese, the County of Kiambu, was growing as fast as any in the world. In Riruta itself, with its boundaries pushed twenty miles out to Rironi, Fr. Kevin Carey reports, at the time, 18,000 Catholics with two priests to serve them. All Saints Kiambu reports the same number. It will soon be divided into four: the mother-church is renamed Riara; Kiambu Town with its fine new church is broken off and gets its resident priest, Paddy Sheridan, in 1977; Fr. Paddy Leonard takes Tinganga in 1973, and the Consolata Fathers Karuri. In 1974, a report to the Irish Province reminded the 159 Spiritans in Kenya that they had opened 28 new missions between 1960 and 1970 and that in Nairobi alone the number of baptized Catholics had doubled between 1968 and 1974. Archbishop McCarthy had already called in reinforcements from other societies, the Maryknoll and Guadelupe Fathers, to open new city parishes. (Consolata Parish dates from 1953.) The needs, in fact, were immense. The large enthusiastic crowd in Uhuru Park for the national celebration of the 1974 Holy Year could leave no doubt that the Catholic Church was alive and well and growing in Kenya. Those who were there will remember that it was a woman-speaker who stirred that immense congregation most. The visit of Pope John Paul II in 1980, the unlikely but most successful Eucharistic Congress in 1985, the Centenary Celebrations in 1989, all continued to reinforce the impression of a happy, humble but vigorous people of God.

While assuming the management of schools, the State was still willing to employ missionaries as teachers or even heads of schools. Several Spiritans continued to act in these capacities:

Cillin ONuallain, formerly of Mangu and St. Teresa's, is now Headmaster of Muhoho; Ruairé O'Connor, recently arrived, will teach in Lari; Kevin Corrigan in Kanunga, Martin Kelly in Ngenia, Des Cahill continues his decades-long devotion to Teacher Training



Meeting of Catholic Educationalists about 1968

at Kilima Mbogo, Sean Kealy and the versatile Seamus Clements are lecturing at the University, Noel Delaney and Christy Burke in the Senior Seminary. Paradoxically, the only school left to us to manage was St. Mary's School, founded in a departure from former policy, at the request of Catholic settlers in 1939. A similar request in Kiambu thirty years before that had come to nothing. From being at first strictly segregated, St. Mary's over the years had become more and more, especially under Fr. Oliver Ellis, a school where students of various racial and religious backgrounds could learn and live in harmony. Queen of Apostles Junior Seminary, moved from Kiserian in 1968 by Fr. Tommy McDonnell, was still run by a group of Spiritans under the experienced Fr. Brendan O'Brien. The Seminary Community had also been given the care of part of St. Teresa's Parish, Eastleigh.

The reader may recall that the mission at Eastleigh had been started by the Precious Blood Sisters as a training school for girls from St. Peter Claver's. With the outbreak of war in 1939, these girls were transferred to the care of Precious Blood Sisters in Kalimoni and Loreto in Limuru. It was in Eastleigh with the Pre-

cious Blood Sisters that Edel Quinn had set up her base and where she died in 1944. With the end of the war, “and since all hope of reopening the Girls’ School was gone” (Eastleigh 19.5.’47), the Provincial and Bishop agreed that the Sisters would be redeployed and the buildings become a separate parish centre with the other four recently delimited city-parishes: St. Austin’s, Holy Family, Parklands and St. Peter Claver’s, which would still continue to develop centres in Pumwani, Shauri Moyo and Makadara(1956).

Eastleigh had been a Mass-centre since 1925, but now with the appointment of Frs. Michael Finnegan and Tom Shannon, and later Paddy Hannan, it began several decades of uninterrupted development. In 1947, it also had Mass and catechetical centres at Mathare Valley Mental Hospital and Police Lines, Kayole, Kassarani (where they immediately open a new school), Katani, Kenya Breweries, Allsop’s, Karura, soon adding Njiru Quarries and Ruaraka. During the Mau Mau time, the British Forces bulldoze three villages in Mathare Valley: Mathare, Uraparani, Kariobangi, and evict the population. Most, then, of the Catholic people in Eastleigh are Goan or Seychellois; the Corpus Christi procession is described (27.5.51) as a “large and devout Asian congregation.” Yet at Midnight Mass (1952) “many Africans attend in spite of the police curfew.”

The new school for girls, opened in 1953, was confided to the Loreto Sisters. Loreto had been in Kenya from the very beginning, but their more recent development began in 1921, when they reopened the Msongari school for “European children.” They had also assumed the direction of Holy Family Parochial School, already started in 1909, “where we have European, Goan and Parsee children all sharing the same class.” Even such a mixture contravened colonial apartheid regulations. The founding diocesan and missionary clergy, though of French origin, had been compelled to follow a school-system racially segregating Arab, Indian, African, European pupils. The early diarist is at first mystified by the word “European.” French colonial policy would have equal opportunity for all, regardless of race. Mumford, an English educationalist, wrote in 1935 for London University: “Association of mental capacity with colour of skin would be placed

by France in the same category as judging character by bumps on the head." St. Teresa's Girls Primary and Secondary would, therefore, be classified as Asian, as also the Boys' School which soon followed. Both schools were built and supported through the continued efforts of the parish community and parents, with some small financial subsidies from the Government. After Independence, of course, segregation was abolished. The imposition of a quota-system in the secondary school caused some difficulties, as it meant all qualified primary graduates could not find a place.

The same community spirit that supported the schools was evident in a rich devotional and liturgical life centring on the Sunday Mass, Easter ceremonies, with all the historic reforms absorbed happily as proclaimed, the favourite feast-days, confraternities, retreats, home-visitation, the sometime 4,000-strong attendance at Corpus Christi or Lady processions, Annual Novena, (*"Why can't we have Mass facing the people for the Novena?"*) people ask. The new church had been blessed by Archbishop McCarthy on October 30, 1955. All funds had been raised locally even in these difficult years, the building site being visited at least once by Mau Mau raiders. It was from here that Fr. Joe Whelan, taking over from Paddy Fullen, visited Mau Mau Detention Centres and Prisons, including Athi River, with Fr. Ted Colleton, and assisted at so many executions. In many years of ministry, only once did a group reject his services.

In 1957, we find a regular Sunday Mass at Ruaraka, called after its Goan benefactor D'Silva, "Baba Dogo." With Mr. D'Silva's help, a large plot had been obtained and the school expanded. He wanted to see every child in school and was most generous in paying fees. After the opening of the Junior Seminary in February 1968, on the other side of the Ruaraka River, Fr. John Kennedy informed the Eastleigh Community that he had been appointed to take care of "Baba Dogo" and the new Kariobangi building estate nearby and the other smaller centres to the North and East. His neighbours will be the Maryknoll Fathers in the new Jericho estate parish, bordering on Makadara, which itself neighboured the new Nairobi South parish, where the Dublin Mercies have opened hospital and school. On the far side of the

city, the new estates of Woodley and Kibera beyond St. Austin's were confided to the Guadelupe Fathers. The new parish in Karen, named after the esteemed Danish settler and writer, had been confided to the Mill Hill Fathers.

The oldest parish on that west side of the city was St. John the Baptist Riruta, partly urban, partly rural. What a contrast between Kevin Carey's thriving 18,000 member parish and Frederick Bugeau's solitary struggle 60 years before that with the indifference of the young and the suspicion of their elders. He had stayed there intermittently for three years. When he is withdrawn, Miss Foxley, veteran Protestant missionary converted to Catholicism, volunteered to stay there and organize a school. She does this till her death in 1923. Riruta is re-occupied again in 1938, when the American Spiran, John Marx, brings the Teacher Training section of Kabaa there, later transferred to Lioki and thence to Kilima Mbogo! Br. Josaphat, as usual, had built new buildings and renovated the old, and the modern history of Riruta parish begins. About the same time, colonial urban rules and rates had forced St. Austin's to disband its "Homestead." For decades they had evaded the law of five families per estate. The coffee-farm was a mere shadow of its past. The coffee must be torn up to make place for growing city suburbs. The proceeds will help resettle displaced Homestead families, many of them in Gicharane, a station of Riruta's, and finance mission expansion elsewhere. In the 1960's, Fr. Carey will help build up the nearby Precious Blood Convent and hive off Ruku Parish, and in the '70's, Gicharane.

While Fr. Kevin Carey could say that over thirty years he had seen Riruta Parish "grow from a complete backwater to one of the biggest in the Archdiocese," Ruaraka Parish on the opposite side of the city was indeed still a "complete backwater." Nevertheless, unaware of the trauma that might have affected his fellow-priests, the newly-appointed pastor found a warm welcome in all the six City Council primary schools in the area. Time and space were made available, and soon he found himself drafted into the ecumenical committee working with the Ministry of Education on the pioneering Christian Religious Education syllabus. It was a novel and inspiring experience to be accepted as a

fellow-Christian by so many separated brethren! As planned, the syllabus could be taught by any teacher who was a Christian as part of the school curriculum. A special period each week, called Pastoral Programme, was to be set aside for what was distinctive to each denomination. (Fr. Tom Farrelly, National Government Inspector for C.R.E., was already stimulating the introduction of a similar syllabus in secondary schools.)

On the parish side of affairs, however, the new priest was sadly taken aback, at Easter 1973, to find only eight people present to celebrate what all his predecessors had called the feast of feasts, the central point of the Church's Year, Easter. The bulk of the congregation, including all choir-members, he realised now belonged with their parish priest, Fr. Tom Meagher, to the newly cut-off parish of Kariobangi. (Fr. Meagher had for many years up to this time served as chancellor of the diocese and secretary to the Archbishop). Happily, the new Ruaraka pastor came on the recent declaration of the Eastern Africa Episcopal Conferences (AMECEA): the pastoral priority, henceforth, was to be the formation of small christian communities. It was the ideal solution for the scattered settlements and nascent suburbs or slums of the well over 100 square miles confided to him. House visitation and meetings brought the community together to pray and to become aware of the needs of their brothers and sisters within and without. Gifted leaders gradually emerged. Processions in public for the Holy Year, Corpus Christi and Rosary knit communities together and liberated them from the "minority-complex of Catholics" of which Fr. Baur, the historian, speaks. "Are we really to pray outside the Church?" Where there was no choir, fifteen choirs attend a parish festival. At Easter, the church will be filled for an all-night Vigil.

Spiritans and Diocesans in the rural parishes worked at the same priority, discussing ways and means at Deanery and Spiritan community meetings and even calling in an expert from South America. In the 1980's, the author was transferred to the rural parish of Ngarariga. Founded in 1954 as an offshoot from Limuru by Fr. Bill Roche, it then had as neighbours Fr. Larry Shine in Kereita (1965), and in Thigio (1968) Fr. Peadar Gallagher. Since the death of the Spiritan, Fr. Alex McCarthy, a decade before, it

had been served by Kikuyu priests. The understandable misgivings of the new arrival were totally dissipated in a very short time. The thirty or more small communities soon gave him their full cooperation. The 200 active lay leaders needed the barest hint to move into fruitful discussion and action. Were sixty volunteer Bible-study facilitators needed? They were there in a week. Were there fifteen or twenty married couples eager to renew their relationship through Marriage Encounter? They were found without delay. Was cooked food needed for a 1,000 pilgrim youth rally? It was ready on time and served with music and dance! Or even for 5,000 attending an Ordination? It was done generously and joyfully. Was a team of volunteer teachers needed to renew the knowledge of the faith through a centenary year? It is ready. Are we ready to contribute and build up a new town-parish of Limuru? We are. Every week some of the 200 housebound and aged in the parish welcomed his (and the Lord's), visit joyfully with faith and trust.

For a century, missionaries had prayed that the Spirit might open to them the heart of the Kikuyu people. This one was granted the privilege of entering it. Those who have assisted at the funerals in recent years of Frs. Kevin Carey or Ruairé O'Connor or years before, joined the 8,000 who flocked to the burial of "Father McGillie" as a Kikuyu elder in Mangu, will agree that others also shared the same privilege.

The attentive reader of previous chapters must be aware that the laity up to our times had not been mere passive spectators in the development of the Church. Active participation by the laity was the rule from the beginning.

The Spiritans arriving a century ago found 100 lay people with their own leaders. The story of Holy Family, and later of Parklands and Eastleigh, is a story of active lay leadership. St. Austin itself was founded, not simply by two Spiritans, but by a squad of active and gifted young men. Let the interested student trace for us, for instance, the career of Florent Muthuanda as he bobs in and out of the Spiritan chronicle: married to the first adult Kikuyu baptized, Maria Wanjiku, (the first-fruits of the Kikuyu Church), he joins the Mangu foundation after some years; later enticed to All Saints to play the harmonium, he begins a 40-year

– long career there in music, coffee, catechesis, missions to Ukamba, drinking-parties and penance, till 1949, when a house is built near Limuru for “our former catechist now badly-off.” And was it a real miracle that cured his little boy Petro at the Holy Innocents’ blessing in 1922?

The Luo Christians, the nucleus of St. Peter Claver’s, had their own elected parish committee from 1917. All Saints, with a handful of converts, had its *conseil des chrétiens* from 1922, (Lioki also), mentioned throughout the 1920’s and celebrated with a big meal in 1931. In the 1930’s and ’40’s, Kalimoni has its regular monthly meeting of elders drawn from its out-schools. Kilima Mbogo has its own committee. In 1945, All Saints has no less than six lay committees: three each for men and women, according to Kikuyu age-groups, the youngest being the Youth. In 1951, they dine with the Bishop. Lioki, in 1960, gives the laity a whole range of ministries: Seminary, Marriages, Catechism, Sunday Mass attendance, the Sick. They had let the Committee drop because of money palaver, but the Bishop reminds them to get going again.

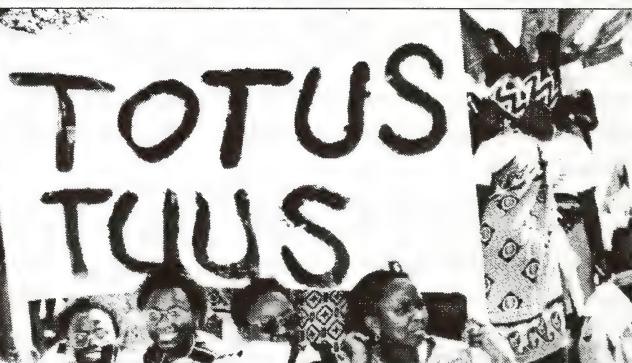
Conjointly, the precursor of our modern small communities, the Sodality or Confraternity or *Kiama* was highly developed, especially in the big city parishes, as described in previous chapters. St. Vincent de Paul dates from 1927. Women’s groups are dedicating themselves to St. Anne in Lioki from 1949. But above all, and it is the author’s conviction, the Legion of Mary with its purely lay organization, the clergy being simple advisors, began the founding training in lay leadership which has spread so rapidly in the past decades throughout both rural and urban Nairobi.

Who, then, will continue the study begun by Fr. Mokaya on Edel Quinn and the Laity and write the history of the lay apostolate in Nairobi? Who will write the history of the lay catechists, men and women, some outstanding examples of whom are mentioned in these pages, and some of whom have favoured the author with their generous cooperation? Should heroes like Januarius be forgotten, the prison catechist in Mau Mau times at risk to his life, and whom the journalist considers worthy of a papal decoration? (St. Peter Claver May’50; May’52. However, it is Bartholomeo Otieno, “Elder of the Church and staunch Legionary,” who gets

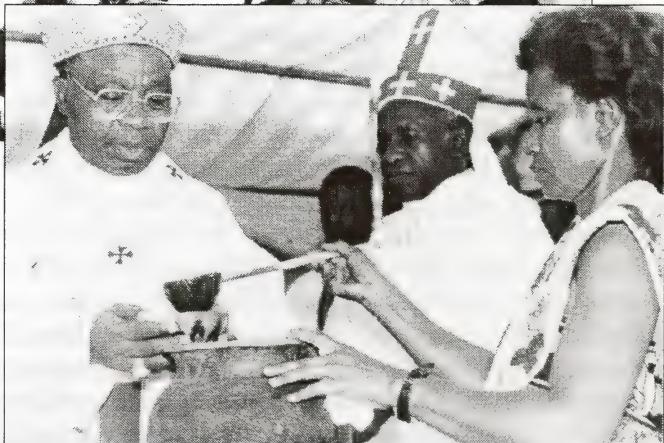
the decoration from Pope John XXIII "for his long and devoted service to the Church" (7.6.'59). Should there have been a decoration for the "ever-faithful Joseph Chege" so highly praised by Fr. Witte and co-pioneer with Fr. Blais, making weeklong tours to inspect the outlying schools between Donyo Sabuk and Kiu River or watching the fever-stricken pastor all night. Another volunteer is needed to describe the origin and development of the two diocesan congregations of St. Joseph and Assumption and another to retrace the history of Missionary Religious Sisters. One society, in particular, was for decades totally devoted to the Mission itself, even to the point of supporting the Fathers: "The Precious Blood Sisters, first in the field, have contributed more than any other Society to the development of the various works" (Prin.Sup. to Paris 1953). "*No other Congregation could do for the Fathers what the Precious Blood Sisters have done and still are doing*" (Kalimoni 1.7.'63). And what of all the individual parishes and schools and their own local histories? The author hopes that this sketch may simply have whetted the readers' and researchers' appetites.

The Spiritans, in spite of their traditional home visitation of the "African locations," had barely addressed the modern urban problems of slums, poverty, delinquency, etc., for which Mathare Valley was the by-word in the early 1970's. (The opening of Edelvale Home, in 1964, by the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity, had been a step in the right direction). In 1968 during a census of Eastleigh parish by a large group of Legion of Mary from Ireland, a group of them got "a great reception there," and on their last day, "went there in force... and said the Rosary in public. They got a very good welcome. Afterwards they said it was the highlight of the *Peregrinatio* (apostolic visit)" (Eastleigh 3-6 August). In 1969/70, the gentle John Flavin spent the last year of his life visiting Mathare shanty-town: "The people loved him because he had time for everybody and was never too busy to listen to their complaints and chatted with all who felt neglected, destitute, frightened or simply were in need of a friendly word" (Henry Koren). Frs. Augustine and Casimir from Tanzania, while preaching a parish retreat in 1974, are "appalled at the poverty they met there." Its immense problems had not been attended to, and the

Pope John Paul promulgates the message of the African Synod to 1,000,000 at Uhuru Park, Nairobi



Archbishops Ndingi and Njenga share a ceremonial gruel



ex-Nigerian Spiritan, Peter Brady, now in charge, was only too glad to welcome Fr. Arnold Grol. The Spirit had also spoken to this Missionary of Africa. Having volunteered to work in Nairobi and been appointed by Cardinal Otunga “to take up work in Eastleigh Parish, with special reference to Mathare Valley, Fr. Arnold is skilled in youth work and social work,” Peter says. Father Grol, later seconded by John Slinger, proceeded at once to gather that overcrowded and neglected populace into real Christian communities, but also extended his apostolic care to parking boys throughout the City with the foundation of the Undugu Society.

As new building estates spring up, Comboni, Holy Cross, Mary-Knoll, Mill Hill, Benedictines and later Divine Word Fathers, build up new parishes in Eastlands. When St. Teresa’s Eastleigh, Nairobi South and Makadara are handed over, the only Spiritan presence in that vast conurbation will be that of Fr. Richard Woulfe, pursuing his quiet ministry to non-Christian but highly organized religious communities. On leaving Kiambu Deanery in 1996, the writer was the last Irish Spiritan to work there.

In 1981, Lukas Mwaura CSSp, the first Kenyan member of the new East African foundation and future Province of the Holy Ghost Fathers was ordained priest. In 1984, Felix Singe CSSp descended from a St. Austin’s Homestead family, was ordained. As I write, he is pastor of Karen at the foot of the Ngong Hills. His parish has many “seedbeds of vocations,” including at Langata the “Spiritan House” for theological students and the seed of a new parish to be opened by his Nairobi confrère, Simon Lobon. But no coffee.

*We now close this book with a
prayer for all those who helped
compile it (Lioki: 31.12.'54).*

Register of Spiritans who lived in Nairobi

(The order is based on year of arrival in E.A.)

Br. Blanchard DILLENSEGER (1858-1904)	St. Austin
Br. Solanus ZIPPER (1871-1947)	St. Austin, All Saints
Fr. Jean FLICK (1865-1938)	St. Austin, Holy Family
Br. Theodomir MATHERN (1871-1932)	St. Austin
Fr. Jean BALL (1862-1947)	St. Austin
Br. Kilian RETTIG (1868-1933)	Mangu, St. Austin, All Saints
Fr. Martial MEYER (1873-1932)	St. Austin, All Saints, Mangu
Fr. Alphonse KUHN (1852-1917)	Holy Family, St. Austin
Fr. Alain HEMERY (1872-1934)	St. Austin
Bp. Emile ALLGEYER (1856-1924)	
Fr. Paul LECONTE (1873-1924)	Mangu, All Saints
Fr. Louis BERNHARD (1872-1939)	All Saints, St. Austin, PS
Fr. Joseph CAYZAC (1871-1941)	St. Austin, Mangu, All Saints, PS
Br. Josaphat NOVITZKI (1880-1963)	All early missions pro tem
Br. Simon WEIGEL (1884-1967)	St. Austin, Holy Family
Fr. Thomas BURKE (1873-1907)	St. Austin, Holy Family
Br. Bonnet VOLMMER (1860-1927)	St. Austin, All Saints
Br. Lucien KAPFER (1871-1908)	St. Austin
Fr. Paul FOUASSE (1879-1940)	All Saints
Fr. Frédéric BUGEAU (1881-1962)	St. Austin, Riruta, All Saints, Holy Family
Fr. Louis DEMAISON (1865-1950)	Holy Family, All Saints
Fr. Pierre MITRECEY (1881-1956)	Lioki, St. Austin, Riruta, Mangu
Fr. Joseph SOUL (1882-1956)	Mangu, All Saints, Holy Family, St. Austin, Lioki
Fr. Charles MEYER (1881-1955)	Holy Family
Fr. Pierre GOETZ (1868-1942)	Holy Family
Fr. Eugène POTTIER (1879-1922)	Mangu, Lioki
Fr. Jules BLAIS (1883-1930)	St. Peter Claver, Kilima Mbogo, Kalimoni
Fr. Charles LAMMER (1882-1968)	Mangu, All Saints, Limuru
Fr. Jacques HORBER (1881-1974)	St. Austin, All Saints

Fr. Joseph FLECK (1870-1953)	Holy Family
Fr. Louis RAULT (1883-1957)	Mangu, St. Austin, Limuru
Br. Florian NIEVELER (1880-1966)	St. Mary's
Br. Claver FERNANDES (1880-1974)	St. Austin, Eastleigh, All Saints, Lioki.
Bp. John Gerard NEVILLE (1858-1943)	
Br. Gustave WALTER (1883-1967)	St. Peter Claver, St. Austin
Fr. Charles HARNIST (1883-1973)	Nairobi
Bp. Henry A. GOGARTY (1884-1931)	Holy Family
Fr. John S. FOLEY (1878-1927)	Holy Family
Fr. Patrick OCONNOR (1890-1966)	Holy Family
Fr. James FLYNN (1891-1964)	St. Austin, Holy Family, Mangu
Fr. Michael WITTE (1895-1961)	St. Peter Claver
Fr. Gerard BROUWER (1894-1969)	Mangu, Kalimoni
Fr. Cornelius McNAMARA (1887-1973)	St. Peter Claver, Holy Family, Thika Chaplaincy
Fr. Michael C. OCONNOR (1892-1978)	Makadara, St. Teresa Eastleigh
Fr. Patrick WALLIS (1895-1997)	All Saints, St. Austin, Lioki
Fr. Joseph STRAESSLE (1885-1962)	St. Austin
Br. Egidius SCHIPHORST (1903)	Limuru
Bp. John W. HEFFERNAN (1883-1966)	
Abp. John J. McCARTHY (1896-1983)	
Fr. Michael FINNEGAN (1896-1975)	St. Peter Claver, Kalimoni, PS
Fr. William DANAHER (1898-1975)	retired Ruaraka
Fr. Jan van den DUNGEN (1898-1972)	St. Austin, Limuru
Fr. Thomas McVICAR (1901-1967)	Nairobi
Fr. Michael Laurence MURREN (1898-1967)	St. Austin, St. Mary's
Fr. John R. MARX (1900)	Riruta
Fr. Patrick McGILL (1902-1970)	St. Peter Claver, Mangu, Kiangunu Kiriku, Karinga, Gatundu Parklands
Bp. Eugene BUTLER (1900-1981)	
Fr. Desmond CONNAUGHTON (1905-1962)	St. Peter Claver
Fr. John HEELAN (1879-1951)	Mangu
Fr. Thomas J. MAHER (1903-1992)	St. Peter Claver
Fr. Martin REIDY (1902-1984)	All Saints, Limuru, ret. St. Mary's
Fr. John REIDY (1899-1970)	St. Austin, Limuru, Holy Family, Riruta
Fr. Colman McMAHON (1903-1981)	St. Peter Claver
Fr. Herbert FARRELL (1891-1973)	St. Austin

Br. Mamertus LUDWITZKI (1908-1974)	St. Austin, St. Mary's
Fr. Edward LAWLESS (1900-1995)	St. Peter Claver, Lioki
Fr. T. Austin LYNCH (1907-1975)	Lioki, Kilima Mbogo, Mangu, Gatitu, Ngarariga
Fr. Gerard M. WHELAN (1904-1973)	Kalimoni, Eastleigh, Thika
Fr. Kevin DEVENISH (1906-1974)	St. Mary's
Fr. Peadar J. KELLY (1909-1985)	Mangu, All Saints, Nairobi South, Limuru, Lioki, PS
Fr. Daniel OLEARY (1908-1978)	Riruta, All Saints, Lioki, Mangu
Fr. William F. HIGGINS (1906-1992)	St. Mary's, Ruaraka
Fr. John FLAVIN (1907-1970)	St. Peter Claver, Kalimoni, Kilima Mbogo, Mangu, Eastleigh
Fr. Thomas McENNIS (1899-1973)	Limuru, All Saints, Holy Family
Fr. Francis MARRINAN (1908-1977)	St. Peter Claver
Fr. Michael J. HIGGINS (1907-1962)	Vicariate Education Secretary
Fr. Patrick REA (1901-1977)	St. Austin, St. Mary's, Queen of Apostles
Fr. Jeremiah J. LYNCH (1899-1973)	Mangu
Fr. Edward J. FITZGERALD (1909-1993)	St. Mary's
Fr. Jerome DOODY (1909-1978)	Limuru, Lioki, Kagwe, Riara, Ruiru
Fr. John J. OMEARA (1909-1970)	Mangu, Eastleigh, St. Mary's, Parklands
Fr. Bernard CULLIGAN (1904-1969)	St. Austin, Kilima Mbogo, Riruta, Kalimoni, Thika, Eastleigh
Br. Columba SHEEHY (1912-1968)	St. Austin
Fr. Michael P. GROGAN (1910-1993)	St. Peter Claver, St. Austin, St. Mary's
Fr. Finbar M. OSULLIVAN (1911-1983)	Mangu
Bp. Joseph SHANAHAN (1871-1943)	St. Austin retired
Fr. Henry BYRNE (1910-1984)	St. Peter Claver
Fr. Joseph LIKELY (1910-1964)	St. Peter Claver
Fr. Gerard T. FOLEY (1910-1985)	St. Mary's
Fr. William P. ROCHE (1911)	Riruta, Limuru, Ngarariga, Gatitu Kiriku
Fr. Patrick FULLEN (1911)	St. Mary's, Makadara, Mangu, Lioki
Fr. Patrick McCAMBRIDGE (1909-1980)	All Saints
Fr. James G. KAVANAGH (1912)	St. Austin, Queen of Apostles
Fr. Patrick A. HARNETT (1914-1994)	St. Mary's, Makadara, Riruta, Holy Family, Ruaraka

Fr. Thomas OSULLIVAN (1911-1986)	Mangu, St. Mary's
Fr. Mel BANNON (1913-1985)	Lioki, Kiriku, Mangu, Kilima Mbogo
Fr. James Francis WHITNEY (1912-1967)	St. Mary's
Fr. John A. OHANRAHAN (1912-1967)	Lioki, Kilima Mbogo
Fr. Edward COLLETON (1920)	Lioki, Riruta, All Saints, Prisons, Gatundu
Fr. Richard JOYCE (1912-1990)	All Saints, St. Mary's
Fr. James B. LYNCH (1913-1986)	Mangu
Fr. John LEAHY (1908-1951)	Lioki, All Saints, Holy Family
Fr. Thomas SHANNON (1913-1984)	St. Peter Claver, Eastleigh, Parklands, Holy Family
Fr. Nicholas KILLIAN (1915)	Holy Family, St. Mary's, Queen of Apostles, Mangu
Fr. John J. F. BRANNIGAN (1914)	Eastleigh
Fr. William F. ONEILL (1915)	St. Mary's
Fr. John A. KENNEDY (1913-1980)	Eastleigh, Ruaraka, St Peter Claver
Fr. Edward J. RYAN (1906)	Lioki
Fr. Michael J. C. OCONNOR (1935-1992)	St. Mary's
Fr. Thomas ROCHE (1913)	Queen of Apostles
Fr. Gerald P. Edward McGEOUGH (1917-1972)	Holy Family, Limuru, Lioki
Fr. Joseph M.P. KEENA (1912-1985)	St. Peter Claver
Fr. Patrick CREMINS (1914)	Mangu, Holy Family, St. Mary's, Kilima Mbogo, Eastleigh
Fr. Desmond McGOLDRICK (1919)	St. Mary's, Mangu, Queen of Apostles
Fr. Gerard HEFFERNAN (1919)	Queen of Apostles, Limuru, Riruta
Fr. James MEADE (1916)	Kiriku, Gatitu, Mangu, St. Mary's
Fr. Michael Francis SOUGHLEY (1917-1991)	Lioki, Mangu, All Saints, Riruta, Muhocho, Karinga, Mangu
Fr. Dermot BROWNE (1918-1997)	Mangu, Lioki, Riruta, St. Mary's
Fr. James OBRIEN (1912-1979)	Asst. Education Secretary
Fr. Gerard ELLIS (1916)	Mangu, Ituru
Fr. Thomas MEAGHER (1919)	Lioki, Kilima Mbogo, St. Peter Claver
Fr. William C. COSTELLOE (1910)	Lioki, Kilima Mbogo, Administration, Ruaraka, Kariobangi, Holy Family, Karibaribi, St. Mary's
Fr. Donal Niall MACAULAY (1912-1997)	Ngarariga
	St. Peter Claver, Queen of Apostles, St. Mary's, PS.

Fr. Liam Laurence OCONNOR (1919)	Githunguri, Eastleigh, Kagwe, St. Austin, St. Mary's, Kalimoni
Fr. John Christopher OCONNOR (1916-1976)	Mangu, Makadara
Fr. James BARRETT (1908-1974)	St. Mary's, Mangu
Fr. Paul CUNNINGHAM (1917-1995)	Mangu, St. Mary's, Muohoho, PS
Fr. Daniel MURPHY (1890-1988)	PS
Fr. Patrick BORAN (1920)	Ruiru
Fr. John J. GANNON (1920)	Lioki, Miguta, Gatitu, Mangu, Thigio Ngarariga, Education Secretary
Fr. Seamus N. CLEMENTS (1920)	St. Peter Claver, Riruta, Mangu, Gatitu, Ngarariga, Kenyatta and Nairobi University
Fr. Patrick NOONAN (1914-1979)	St. Austin, St. Mary's
Fr. Bartholomew LYONS (1917)	Riruta, Kilima Mbogo
Fr. Michael DOWNEY (1921)	St. Peter Claver, Thika, Kalimoni
Fr. Joseph FULLEN (1916)	Kiangunu, St. Mary's
Fr. Francis G. COMERFORD (1920)	Mangu, Queen of Apostles, Kilima Mbogo, Nunciature, Editor Catholic Mirror, Thika
Fr. Patrick HANNAN (1921-1993)	Eastleigh, Thika
Fr. Patrick M. OSHEA (1920-1972)	St. Mary's
Fr. Joseph BABU (1919)	Holy Family, Tinganga
Fr. Hugh REDMOND (1921-1963)	Nairobi
Fr. Patrick A. SHERIDAN (1920)	Kilima Mbogo, Limuru, Eastleigh, Karinga, Kiambu Town
Fr. Thomas McDONNELL (1922)	Kilima Mbogo, Githunguri, Queen of Apostles
Fr. Joseph KELLY (1924)	AMECEA, Catholic University E.A.
Fr. John F. HORGAN (1915-1979)	St. Mary's, Kalimoni, Thika
Fr. Alexander McCARTHY (1920-1974)	Riruta, St. Peter Claver, Miguta, Ngarariga
Fr. Charles McBRIDE (1923)	St. Mary's, Parklands
Fr. John C. OMAHONEY (1924)	All Saints, Karen, Kalimoni, District Bursar
Fr. R. Finbar REYNOLDS (1922)	Kilima Mbogo
Fr. James J. MEENAN (1894-1967)	St. Mary's
Fr. Kevin P. CAREY (1926-1994)	Riruta, Ruku, Gicharane

Fr. Thomas M. FARRELLY (1925)	St. Mary's, Kenyatta University, CRE Inspectorate
Fr. Anthony J. FARRELL (1925)	Kilima Mbogo, Limuru, Kiambu
Fr. Michael DUGGAN (1926)	All Saints, Ngarariga
Fr. Cillin ONUALLAIN (1926-1979)	Mangu, St. Mary's, Eastleigh, Muoho
Fr. Desmond M. CAHILL (1926)	Kilima Mbogo, St. Mary's
Fr. J. Joseph WHELAN (1914-1985)	Eastleigh, Holy Family
Fr. Noel COX (born 1926)	St. Mary's
Fr. Edward CORCORAN (1927-1997)	St. Mary's
Fr. Sean A. OSHAUGHNESSY (1930)	Eastleigh
Fr. Michael J. ODONNELL (1924)	Kagwe, St. Mary's, St. Austin
Fr. Sean OCONNELL(1927)	St. Mary's
Fr. F. Brendan HEERAN (1931)	St. Mary's, St. Paul's
Fr. Hugh J. OREILLY (1930)	Kilima Mbogo
Fr. Richard M. WOULFE (1919)	Kilima Mbogo, Ruaraka, Makadara, Buru Buru, Chaplaincy non-Chr. Rels.
Fr. J. Brendan OBRIEN (1924)	All Saints, Lioki, Kilima Mbogo, Queen of Apostles, Spring Valley, Kalimoni
Fr. Patrick COYNE (1931)	Kilima Mbogo, Githunguri, St. Mary's
Fr. Robert DEADMAN (1931, now O.Cist.)	Muoho
Fr. Thomas P. TUNNEY (1934)	Spiritan House
Fr. Kevin B. CORRIGAN (1933)	Kanunga, Muoho, Nazareth, Q.A.S.
Fr. Noel P. DELANEY (1932-1979)	Ituru, Kenyatta University, Muoho, St. Thomas Aquinas, PS
Fr. Gerard EGAN (1935)	St. Mary's
Fr. Martin J. KELLY (1937)	Ngarariga, Kanunga, Queen of Apostles, Karinga
Fr. John HUGHES (1921)	Queen of Apostles, Eastleigh, Kilima Mbogo
Fr. William A. McKENNA (1918)	St. Mary's
Fr. A. Francis DUFFY (1930)	Githunguri, St. Mary's
Fr. Joseph M. STEELE (1940)	Queen of Apostles
Fr. Laurence SHINE (1937)	Kagwe, Kereita, PS
Fr. Patrick J. LEONARD (1937)	Kereita, All Saints, Tinganga, St. Peter Claver, St. Austin, PS

Fr. Patrick WHELAN (1937)	St. Mary's, Kilima Mbogo
Fr. James C. COLLERY (1920-1987)	Editor Catholic Mirror, Kilima Mbogo, Administration, Miguta Makadara, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Paul's, Kabete, Mater Hospital
Fr. Christopher BURKE (1937)	St. Mary's
Fr. Michael MALONE (1939)	St. Mary's
Fr. Michael KEATING (1940)	Kagwe, Miguta, Githunguri, Mukuru
Fr. Patrick OTOOLE (1938)	St. Mary's
Fr. John J. MAHON (1940)	St. Mary's
Fr. Gerald H. McCONNELL (1930)	Riruta, Lioki
Fr. Patrick CARROLL (1939)	Spiritan House
Fr. Peter F. SUTTLE (1941)	Kiriku, Thika, All Saints
Fr. Sean M. HOGAN (1941)	St. Mary's
Fr. John C. KEVIN (1941)	St. Mary's, Queen of Apostles, PS
Fr. L. Oliver ELLIS (1933)	Eastleigh
Fr. Peter B. BRADY (1915-1988)	Gicharane
Fr. Desmond J. ARIGHO (1942)	All Saints, St. Mary's
Fr. Cormac OBROLCHAIN (1941)	Kilima Mbogo, Queen of Apostles
Fr. James F. McDONNELL (1941)	Nairobi
Fr. Patrick DOODY (1942)	Nairobi University, St. Mary's
Fr. Brendan RUSSELL (1918-1978)	Ruaraka, Kalimoni, Kiambu, Ngarariga, Lioki
Fr. Cothrai GOGAN (1926)	Holy Family
Fr. Patrick F. WALSH (1910-1994)	All Saints, Thigio
Fr. Peadar GALLAGHER (1917-1989)	St. Thomas Aquinas, Kenyatta University
Fr. Sean KEALY (1937)	Holy Family, Queen of Apostles, Eastleigh, St. Mary's
Fr. P. Paul WALSH (1941)	Thigio, Ngarariga, Kagwe, Tinganga
Fr. Patrick J. DUNNE (1922)	Kiriku, All Saints, Eastleigh, Holy Family
Fr. Brian J. CRONIN (1942)	Kiriku, Apostles of Jesus, Gicharane, Kilima Mbogo
Fr. A. James MOHAN (1918)	St. Mary's
Fr. Francis J. CAFFREY (1934)	Karinga, Gatitu, Thigio
Fr. P. Vincent McDONALD (1925)	St. Paul's, PS
Fr. Martin KEANE (1941)	Gatundu, St. Austin, Uzima Centre
Fr. Pearse MOLONEY (1919)	

Fr. Ruairé O'CONNOR (1945-1997)	Kereita, Kanunga, Queen of Apostles, St. Austin, St. Paul's, Mater Hospital
Fr. Patrick A. ROE (1940)	Queen of Apostles, Spiritan House, Tangaza
Fr. Edward D'ARCY (1916)	Ruku
Fr. Michael J. McMAHON (1938)	St. Mary's
Fr. Thomas GOUGH (1906-1976)	Queen of Apostles
Fr. Edward A. OFARRELL (1946)	All Saints, Holy Family, Queen of Apostles, St. Mary's
Fr. Thomas Hogan (1946)	St. Mary's
Fr. Albert de JONG (1943)	Makadara, Tangaza
Fr. Thomas R. McDONALD (1932)	Spiritan House, University of Nairobi
Fr. Myles HEALY (1939)	Holy Family, St. Austin, St. Paul's
Fr. Remi M. MACHA (1952-1993)	Tinganga
Fr. William T. MAHER (1936-1996)	St. Thomas Aquinas
Fr. Conor MURPHY (1914-1991)	District Bursar
Fr. Pius ONYANGO (1955)	Kalimoni, Karen, St. Mary's
Fr. Rogath KIMARYO (1956)	Spiritan House
Fr. Alfred MATTEI (1957)	Tinganga
Fr. Solomon MBANZABUGABO (1955)	Spiritan House
Fr. Charles ODENY (1984)	Spiritan House
Fr. Isaiah KESSY (1858-1993)	Spiritan House
Fr. James PETERS (1924)	St. Thomas Aquinas
Fr. Simon LOBON (1962)	Spiritan House
Fr. Felix SINGE (1961)	Karen
Fr. Clemence L. MUSHI (1958)	Kalimoni
Fr. Benoit K. MKAMBA (1963)	Spiritan House
Fr. Festo ADRABO (1955)	Spiritan House
Br. Ignatius CURRY (1942)	St. Mary's, District Bursar

Note: PS = Principal Superior

PRAYER

When our successors read this journal to recall the humble beginnings of the mission, while lifting their eyes towards Heaven, may they give God their homage of gratitude to thank Him for the blessings with which he has favoured this mission since its origins, and let them not forget in their prayers the workers of the first hour.

Jules Blais CSSp

Journal: St. Peter Claver's, 31.12.'23



Cemetery at St. Austin's

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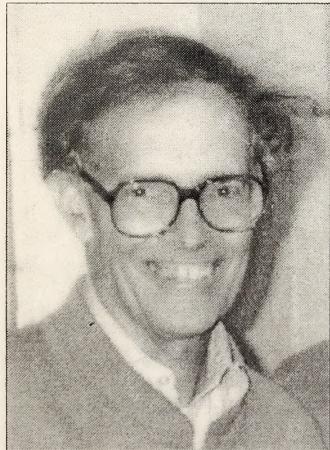
This book is about the work of the Holy Ghost Missionaries in Nairobi during the last 100 years. They arrived here in 1899.

Among the interesting facts recorded, you will come to know when the mother-coffee-trees of Kenya were grown, and read about Karen Blixen visiting them.

You will hear about Fr MacNamara and St Peter Claver's new Church.

You will be reminded of the Venerable Edel Quinn, Fr Peyton with his Rosary Crusade to Kiamwangi and Kiambu and the City.

You will hear how Kikuyus first came to read, about Kabaa and Mangu High School, about Fr McGill and Mau Mau and how troubled times brought thousands to the Gospel of Jesus and His Church.



Cothrai Gogan, Spiritan missionary, active in Kikuyu and Nairobi city-parishes for 25 years, was given a year off to study the community diaries of his predecessors. He presents them here in summary.

He has recorded, sometimes in verse, his own feelings and reflections about the ministry.